

# Appeal Tribune

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**Graduates celebrate with confetti and silly string during the Sprague High School commencement at Sprague High School, June 8, 2018.** ANNA REED / STATESMAN JOURNAL

## Grad rates

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### Salem-Keizer sees some progress

Celebrations continued in Salem-Keizer Public Schools, with the district's overall four-year graduation rate increasing from 73.36 percent to 76.56 percent.

Additionally, students considered economically disadvantaged in the district increased by 5-percentage-points, Asian/Pacific Islander students increased by 12-percentage-points and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students increased by a whopping 15-percentage-points.

"To say we're incredibly proud would be an understatement," said Salem-Keizer Superintendent Christy Perry.

"All the way from elementary to high school, we have thousands of educators who have dedicated themselves to helping our students achieve one thing: graduating school prepared for successful lives," she said. "Are we satisfied with where we are now? Absolutely not. But these results invigorate us because we know that what we're doing is truly working."

### Decreases among Native American, Black students

Though there are many improvements, a few demographic groups in Salem-Keizer dropped in their four-year graduation rate.

American Indian/Alaska Native students dropped by about 8-percentage-points from 68.42 percent to 60.98 percent.

Black/African American students decreased by about 8-percentage-points from 59.52 to 51.16 percent.

Multi-racial and migrant students also dropped a couple percentage points each, while non-economically disadvantaged students as a group remained stagnant.

When asked about these decreases, Perry said they were largely affected by ninth graders' success. She said schools at all levels are beginning to intervene sooner with practices high schools are seeing positive results from, like individ-

ual mentorships for students struggling to attend regularly or stay caught up with challenging material.

She said they will also need to work more on creating strong foundations during elementary school and on bettering early childhood education.

"We're pausing to celebrate, but we're not done yet," she said.

### Salem-Keizer high school rates

When looking at individual high schools in Salem-Keizer, each school either increased or remained stagnant for its four-year graduation rate.

Early College saw a 6-percentage-point increase, McKay and West each saw a 4-percentage-point increase and Sprague saw a 3-percentage-point increase.

South Salem, Roberts and McNary high schools remained stagnant.

West Salem has the highest graduation rate of the district's six traditional high schools, coming in at 91.54 percent.

And while North Salem saw the largest bump of about 9-percentage-points, they still have the lowest of the traditional high schools at 76.80 percent.

North Salem Assistant Principal Carlos Ruiz said the sense of urgency to help students improve has never been higher.

He and his team have worked on making sure they know every student's name and their stories. Their work has resulted in hundreds more regular attenders, in addition to their rising graduation rate and decreasing drop out rate.

"We want them to believe in themselves because we certainly believe in them," he said.

### Impact from boundary changes

The Salem-Keizer School Board will vote next month on proposed boundary changes meant to alleviate overcrowding across district schools, working in conjunction with approved bond projects.

Superintendent Perry said the district is determined not to let the boundary changes affect the district's growing graduation rates.

They plan to pay particular attention to stu-

dents entering high school, not just because that's already a challenging transition, but because some may be going to schools other than where they originally planned.

She said the district sees high attendance and graduation rates among students who have strong ties in the schools and strong relationships with an adult there, so making sure those students transitioning have those connections right off the bat will be important.

They want to promote one sport, one club or one activity to keep students engaged.

### Why graduation rates matter

Though graduation rates are only one indicator of academic success, research shows as long as graduation rates are below 100 percent, non-graduates earn less and require more social services, costing Oregonians hundreds of millions of dollars in Medicaid, lost tax revenue and incarceration expenses every year.

Oregon also tracks five-year graduation rates and completion rates for those earning their GED or other non-traditional diplomas to get a sense of who reaches the finish line, versus those who actively drop out.

The Legislature has instructed the state education department to reach a 100 percent graduation rate by 2025.

During the 2019 legislative session, state lawmakers, especially those serving on the Joint Committee on Student Success, will be recommending a road map and budget package to further improve Oregon's K-12 education system.

Additionally, Gov. Brown has proposed a nearly \$2 billion investment budget in education, which would allocate \$794 million to reduce class sizes in early grades and lengthen the school year, \$133 million to fully fund the High School Success program, known as Measure 98, \$7.7 million for Native American student programs and a \$6 million increase for the African American/Black Student Success program.

"How our state provides for the needs of our children is a marker of who we are as a community," Brown said in a statement. "Every student in Oregon deserves an education that sets them up for success and helps them graduate from high school with a plan for their future."

See the latest data and find more information at [www.oregon.gov/ode/reports-and-data](http://www.oregon.gov/ode/reports-and-data).

Contact reporter Natalie Pate at [npate@statesmanjournal.com](mailto:npate@statesmanjournal.com), 503-399-6745 or follow her on Twitter @NataliePate or Facebook at [www.facebook.com/nataliepatejournalist](http://www.facebook.com/nataliepatejournalist).

Published every Wednesday by the Statesman Journal, P.O. Box 13009, Salem, OR 97309.

USPS 469-860, Postmaster: Send address changes to Appeal Tribune, P.O. Box 13009, Salem, OR 97309. PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID: Salem, OR and additional offices.

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## River

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are willing to pay between \$2 million and \$3.6 million to avoid curtailment of some uses of water, though those numbers would rise if water rationing was mandatory for all uses.

■ NORPAC Foods estimates if it reliability of being able to use water from the river for cooling at its Stayton facility, it would cost between \$2 million to \$3 million to find alternative sources.

■ Research by economists at Oregon State estimate for every foot of drop in water level below full pool at Detroit Lake, visitor days decline by 2 percent.

The report cites fish counts from the Upper and Lower Bennett Dams, which are owned by Salem and the Santiam Water Control District, that show wild chinook are down year-over-year to 411 in 2018 from 1,630 in 2014, and wild steelhead were down to 401 from 943 in the same span.

The estimated value of the hydropower generated at Detroit Dam and Big Cliff Dam is \$7.8 million. But the dollar value placed on the annual value of avoided CO2 emissions is \$19.8 million.

The estimated value of municipal water that cities including Salem, Stayton, Turner and Gates is \$66 million per year based on the amount customers pay to use the water. That doesn't include water used by Jefferson, Albany and Millersburg, which also draw some water from other sources as well as the North Santiam.

"The effects of the state and federal actions really do have an effect on the viability of those communities," said Danielle Gonzalez, director of economic development for Marion County.

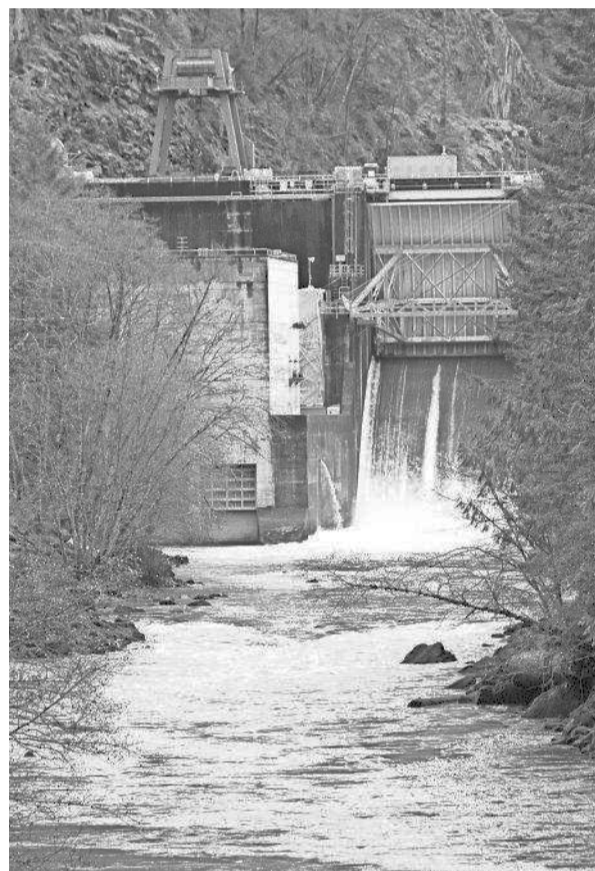
The study says 234,910 people live within the watershed and about 6 percent of Oregon's population gets its drinking water from the river, and the population is up from 155,439 in 1990.

Salem is the largest municipal water user with 49,304 connections using 16,253,000,000 gallons of water a year.

NORPAC's processing facility in Stayton uses half of the city's water, 319,037,000 gallons per year.

At least 23,867 acres of land in Marion and Linn counties are irrigated with water from the North Santiam. The annual value of those crops is \$53.9 million.

There are 1,473 jobs tied directly to the river in industries such as



**The North Santiam River below Big Cliff Dam near Mill City is know to Steelhead anglers as the best spot for wrangling the fish.** STATESMAN JOURNAL FILE

manufacturing (679), government (253) and hospitality (236).

Water-based recreation is estimated to bring in \$36.5 million each year.

If something goes wrong, a lot of people – and a lot of money – is impacted.

"I always think that the value of water is more, but I think that this is a good starting point," Gonzalez said. "If we have a project that is going to cost \$100 million, we know why."

The report states climate change will impact the river by water supply availability, flows and ecosystems. A Willamette Water 2100 project study found average surface temperatures could rise between 2 and 13 degrees from current temperatures.

In addition, warmer air temperatures are expected to precipitate a decline in snowpack, which is expected to have a greater impact on the North Santiam River and McKenzie River than the rest of the Willamette River basin.

The ECONorthwest report states the rise in temperatures and increased nutrient deposition may increase the frequency and magnitude of toxic algae blooms, such as the one at Detroit last summer.

The ECONorthwest report states the value people place on the recovery of Willamette River Steelhead and Upper Willamette River Spring Chinook over 50 years is estimated at \$621 million, calculated on a per-household willingness-to-pay over 10 years of \$401.96 per household.

Among the other factors not assigned a monetary value such as aesthetics for property own-

ers along the water – including Mill Creek in Salem – cultural and tribal values and health and well-being.

"This is just a first step," McCoun said. "I think deeper analysis will be needed to be done."

"If you think about it, it should be done on all the water sources. It should be done on the Clackamas and the McKenzie rivers. In my mind, it's really the water budget."

A stakeholder meeting to discuss the ECONorthwest report led by report author Sarah Reich will take place at 10 a.m. Feb. 19 in the conference room at the Marion County Public Works building at 5155 Silverton Road NE, Salem.

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### Six numbers from the ECONorthwest report on the North Santiam River

**\$621 million:** The value Oregonians place on recovery of Upper Willamette Chinook in 50 years.

**\$66 million:** The amount customers pay for water from the North Santiam each year.

**\$53.9 million:** The annual value of crops produced with water from the North Santiam.

**\$36.5 million:** The estimated value of water-based tourism along the North Santiam each year based on 500,000 visits a year.

**\$7.8 million:** The value of hydropower produced at Detroit Dam and Big Cliff Dam.

**2 percent:** The drop in visitors at Detroit Lake for every foot below full pool.

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