

## GRADUATION RATE PUBLISHED

## La Grande's response to latest ODE report

On January 23, the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) released its report on the 2018-19 graduation rates for school districts in Oregon.

This is the 4-year cohort graduation rate, the percentage of students who earn a standard diploma within four years of entering high school.

The La Grande School District's graduation rate is 79.87%, which is down from the previous year's rate of 86.42%.

La Grande School District Superintendent George Mendoza said that district administration did a careful analysis of the Class of 2019 graduates to break down the numbers, track students and interpret the apparent decrease in graduation rate.

The resulting analyses showed that seven of those students are in continuing enrollment, meaning they are staying in school at LHS. Twelve students from 2018-19 earned their GEDs and were included in the 4-year cohort completion rate, which is 87.42%. Thirteen students from the Class of 2019 out of 150 students were true non-completers.

Mendoza also said the district has established several systems to support students in various ways, not only academically. These include adding a high school



success counselor, more Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses, an in-school health center and more robust mental health and behavioral supports for students.

"We have a lot of important systems in place to help students succeed, and we will continue to utilize those systems," said Mendoza. "The goal in our strategic plan is to exceed state averages in all areas and we continue to work hard

toward that."

According to Scott Carpenter, the district's director of education programs, La Grande's graduation rate has remained steady around 80% for several years, but the 5-year cohort completion rate has hovered around 88% to 90%, and this year's rate was 93.9%. This rate includes students who earned a GED, or an extended or adult high school diploma within five years of entering high school.

"As a district, we focus on completers and on any good outcome for kids, even if that takes longer than four years and may not mean a standard diploma," said Carpenter. "Every story is different and sometimes includes something other than a standard diploma. We work with students and families to help make these decisions."

Carpenter enumerated several program initiatives that engage students and

help them work toward graduation. These include: The REACH Program, Tiger Ambassadors (student mentorship program), ASPIRE Program, CTE Pathways Program, and a program called AVID that will start next year.

"We will continue to use Measure 98 funds," he said, "and our upcoming Student Investment Account (SIA) funds to continue to develop strategies to engage our students."