

American Indian graduation rates show largest gain in Portland schools

PORTLAND, Ore. – Portland Public Schools’ high school graduation rates have increased for students of color, with American Indian students showing the largest gain at 15 points.

“We are excited to see PPS headed in the right direction,” said Matt Morton, executive director of the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA) and PPS school board member. “We look forward to continue our partnership with the district to build upon these gains.”

Graduation rates for Native students in Portland were previously reported at 29 percent. Graduation rates for Native students remain below 50 percent despite the significant increase.

Over the last five years, NAYA and PPS have made significant investments to partner and provide culturally specific and educational services to self-identified Native students. NAYA educational youth advocates work with students to create individually tailored academic plans with their families.

Services include after-school homework and tutoring support, links to college and career services, and connection to cultural and recreational services.

“I’m pleased to see our Native students make such a significant gain in graduation rates,” said Carole Smith, PPS superintendent. “Whenever there’s an increase, I know it takes a team and I

appreciate all those who worked so hard to make these gains. However, we still have much work to do. I look forward to working with NAYA and other partners to continue to improve the outcomes for Native students and all historically underserved communities in Portland schools.”

NAYA also partners with PPS through its Early College Academy (ECA), an alternative high school that serves students with at-risk factors.

ECA has an exceptional 90 percent graduation and retention rate due in part to its culturally infused curricula as well as the holistic services readily available to students on-site.

“We have much work to do in order to reach equity for our students, but we’re pleased to see these initial investments paying off and will work to continue increasing graduation rates,” said Morton.

NAYA has served Portland’s Native community for 40 years with a range of services to support the mind, body, spirit and community of our people.

NAYA’s mission is to enhance the diverse strengths of our youth and families, in partnership with the community, through cultural identity and education.

Last year, NAYA had an impact on more than 6,000 people in our region.

Youth Opportunities

NCAI Native Graduate Health Fellowship

The NCAI Native Graduate Health Fellowship aims to address the stark disparities in Native health by building a pipeline of Native health professionals who are prepared to lead in formulating and promoting health policies and practices that address the unique needs of American Indians and Alaska Natives.

While the current challenges of Native health are great, some of the most promising developments are from Native nations that are exercising considerable control over health care delivery and workforce development. Building the capacity of individuals and communities is critical to empowering Tribes to assert this right to self-governance and self-determination in the public health domain.

By supporting graduate students in various health-related fields, NCAI seeks to increase the number of Native health leaders and equip them with the tools necessary to achieve our vision of strong, healthy Native communities.

The fellowship will include two components – financial support and professional development in Tribal health policy. The successful fellow will receive an award of \$5,000, which can be used to cover both academic and living expenses.

Applicants should be members of an American Indian or Alaska Native Tribal nation and must be new or continuing full-time students in fall 2014 pursuing graduate or professional degrees in any health-related area, including doctor of medicine (MD), master of nursing (MSN), doctor of nursing practice (DNP), master of public health (MPH), master of pharmacy (MPharm), etc.

Applications are due via email to Laura Bird at lbird@ncai.org by March 21, 2014. Applicants will be notified of their status by May 1, 2014.

A completed application submission must include a personal/education information form, essay, résumé or curriculum vitae, and two letters of recommendation.

All complete and eligible applications will be reviewed by a selection committee composed of NCAI staff and other key leaders in Native health.

For more information, visit ncai.org.

NCAI Fellowships & Internships 2014 Wilma Mankiller Fellowship Internship Opportunities

The National Congress of American Indians is committed to investing in the next generation of leaders to protect and advance Tribal sovereignty for generations to come. Young Native leaders are invited to apply for either our internship or the Wilma Mankiller Fellowship.

The application can be downloaded and completed online at this link – <http://tinyurl.com/NCAIapp>.

Deadlines are as follows:

- Wilma Mankiller Fellowship - Applications due March 17 with decisions made no later than April 21.
- Summer 2014 Internship - Applications will be accepted until March 31 with decisions made no later than April 30.
- Fall 2014 Internship - Applications will be accepted until June 23 with decisions made no later than July 11.

Important information, deadlines to help the college-bound Tribal senior prepare for next year

- | March | May |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check for three Tribal scholarships at ctsi.nsn.us.• Complete scholarships.• Start working on Tribal higher education or adult vocational training grant application. This can be found on the Tribe’s website and is due June 30.• Review the Student Aid Report (SAR).• You should start receiving admission responses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is the deadline for final decisions for universities.• Send letter of intent to registrar.• Line up a summer job.• Attend your Senior Awards Night.• Review any award letters and be sure you understand the terms and conditions that accompany each type of aid.• If necessary, arrange for housing and a meal plan (at school).• Send thank you notes to any person/committee from which you received a scholarship. |
| April <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Send thank you notes to people who have helped you.• Make final decision about which college or university you will attend.• If you decide to decline enrollment to a college or university to which you have been accepted, send notice indicating this to the college’s admissions office. | June <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tribal higher education and AVT applications are due June 30!• Attend graduation – congratulations!• Make arrangements for your final grades to be sent to colleges and universities.• Good luck! |

COLLEGE DAY

April 25th, 2014

Event is for Native American & Alaskan Natives **MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS** at the Native American Community Center, 710 SW JACKSON STREET at 11:00am

SW Jackson stop on the trimet max green line

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Learning everything you need to know about college. Getting to know the PSU campus and campus life. TIPS on getting into college. Fun and ENTERTAINING!

Contact: Jessica Carroll @ jcarroll@pdx.edu or call Dean Azule 503-725-5348.