

Most county high schools see growth in graduates

Poverty, lack of vocational options cited as obstacles

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Astoria High School recorded an 8 percent gain in graduation last year, according to data from the Oregon Department of Education released last week.

Nearly three-quarters of class of 2015 at Astoria — 104 students from an adjusted group of 143 — graduated in four years, compared with less than 67 percent from the class of 2014. Superintendent Craig Hoppes said, in a release, the graduation rate last year is the highest in more than a decade.

The state delineates between on-time graduates — those who finish in four years — and students who complete high school with an extended or adult diploma, or by passing a GED, or General Educational Development, exam. Three students earned a GED last year at Astoria, upping its completion rate to nearly 77 percent.

Lynn Jackson, principal of Astoria High School, said he was pleased to see the district surpass the state's graduation average, despite the challenges with student mobility and poverty the North Coast

faces. "Poverty is what is providing the largest obstacles for academic success right now."

He said the high school has established new supports to help struggling students, such as credit-recovery courses, coupled with hundreds of more individualized interventions between a student and a counselor each year.

"This is personal occupation, and I think our school districts are small enough that these are not faceless numbers," Jackson said, adding state statistics help the school take a systematic as well as individual approach

Need for shop

A large disparity between the performance of male and female students was apparent in Astoria last year. About 67 percent of males graduated, compared to 80 percent of females. All three students to pass the GED exam were women. Of the 33 students counted last year as not completing high school, 22 were males.

Jackson said the traditional educational model does not play to the strengths of many local males, as cuts to more hands-on, career-technical programs has made it more difficult to keep them engaged in academics. He lamented the loss of the decades-old Area Vocational Center in Miles Crossing, which up until the early

Graduation rates for Clatsop County schools, 2014-15 (Four-year cohort rate by percent)

School district	2014-15	2013-14
Astoria	74.8%	65.6%
Seaside	75.4	76.3
Warrenton-Hammond	69.1	66.7
Knappa	66.7	65.9
Jewell	64.3	100
Statewide	73.8	72

Source: Oregon Department of Education

EO Media Group graphic

2000s provided a campus 2 miles away from the high school where students from across the county came to learn career-technical trades. He said the district is starting to bus students to Clatsop Community College for automotive courses.

Seaside

Seaside had the highest on-time graduation rate in Clatsop County last year. Nearly three-quarters of seniors finished in four years, a 1 percent drop from the previous year, and more than 80 percent completed high school through other means.

A higher rate of males (80 percent) graduated than females (70 percent) in Seaside. Nearly the same rate of economically disadvan-

tagged students (73 percent) graduated in four years as did the overall class of 2015, along with two of the district's three English Language Learners.

"What we understand is that excellent teaching for students who have some sort of additional challenges ... there are instructional strategies that really support them," Seaside High School Principal Sheila Roley said.

She and Jackson said their schools have used strategies from the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol, an instructional strategy to better reach both English learners and native speakers.

Seaside had 22 students who neither completed high school, earned an alternate certificate nor re-enrolled this

year. Of Astoria's 33 students who did not complete, 23 did not earn an alternate certificate or re-enroll this year. Jackson and Roley said educators know most of these students and try to help. But some, they said, may have only attended for weeks at a school, or left as early as their freshman year.

"Some are students who move away, and we don't get the information necessary to track them," Roley said. "And some students are right here in the community, for whatever personal reason."

Warrenton, Knappa, Jewell

In Warrenton-Hammond School District last year, 69 percent of the class of 2015 graduated in four years, up

more than 2 percent from the year prior. The rate included nearly 86 percent of female students, less than 59 percent of males and 61 percent of economically disadvantaged students.

Of the 17 students who did not complete high school in Warrenton last year, 14 were males. Like Astoria, the district has also been trying to add more career-technical opportunities to better engage students, such as robotics teams and an automotive club operated by volunteers out of the high school's bus barn.

Two-thirds of the class of 2015 in Knappa — 24 students — graduated in four years, up slightly from the academic year prior, while one student completed by passing the GED exam. Fifty-seven percent of the district's economically disadvantaged students graduated in four years. Of the district's five students with disabilities, four earned a diploma in four years.

The four-year graduation rate in Jewell, heavily skewed by the small number of students, plummeted last year. Nine of the district's 14 seniors graduated, with another passing the GED exam. The year prior, all 11 of the district's seniors had earned a diploma in four years.

For a more comprehensive data on graduation, visit the Department of Education's graduation web page at <http://tinyurl.com/3p8txpks>

Bill will nix USPS ban on pot ads

Legislators acted after Long Beach postmaster threatened

The Daily Astorian

Four members of Oregon's congressional delegation, including Democratic Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, along with Reps. Earl Blumenauer and Suzanne Bonamici, introduced a bill Thursday to rescind the U.S. Postal Service's ban on pot ads.

The Marijuana Advertising in Legal States (MAILS) Act would allow publications in Oregon, Washington and other states where marijuana is legal to mail publications containing written advertising for the product.

The bill comes after Long

Beach, Washington, Postmaster Mark Scarborough contacted Chinook Observer Publisher Matt Winters in December with a memo dated Nov. 27 from managers of the Portland District.

"The memo contained the eye-catching line: 'If a mail-piece contains an advertisement for marijuana, that piece is unmailable ...,'" Winters said.

The Observer and The Daily Astorian share a weekly publication, Coast Weekend, which frequently carries advertising for marijuana dispensaries in Pacific County, Washington, and Clatsop County. About half of

the Observer's newspapers are sent through the mail. A small portion of Astorian subscribers are also served by mail.

The MAILS Act would reverse the Postal Service's declaration. Other co-sponsors of the bill are Reps. Jared Huffman, D-Calif., and Rep. Dana Rohrabacher, R-Calif.

"Federal agencies must respect the decisions made by law-abiding Oregonians and small business owners in the state," Wyden said in a release Thursday. "Our bill updates the federal approach to marijuana, ending the threat to news publications that choose to accept advertising from legal marijuana businesses in Oregon and other states where voters also have freely decided to legalize marijuana."

State says Moda doesn't have enough money to continue

Consumers alerted to potential scams

Oregon Public Broadcasting

Oregon says Moda, one of the state's biggest individual health insurers, doesn't have enough money to continue operating.

The state is requiring Moda to raise more money and transfer its individual market plans to another carrier.

The state order said continuing business is quote, "hazardous to the public."

Jesse O'Brien with the consumer group OSPIRG said Moda customers should still be able to get care and the state should ensure their claims are paid.

"So you will have options and you don't have to worry about losing access to healthcare services. But I also certainly understand that this new may be alarming to Moda's current members," O'Brien said.

Beware of scam

Meanwhile, the state is alerting consumers to potential scam in light of the uncertainty.

There have been multiple incidents in which consumers worried about the status of their insurance with Moda receive calls from people who claim to be able to help them. The incidents involve callers who ask for personal information, including Social Security numbers, and who threaten to cut off consumers' coverage if they do not act immediately.

If you receive such a call, do not provide personal

information. Oregonians who believe they have been a victim of a scam about Moda should contact the Oregon Department of Justice's Consumer Protection Hotline at 503-378-4320 or <http://bit.ly/1VSxdZd>, or visit www.OregonConsumer.gov.

Libraries auction off Little Free Libraries

SEASIDE — The Astoria, Seaside, and Warrenton libraries are holding an auction of Little Free Libraries and a fundraiser, to support the Reading Outreach in Clatsop County (ROCC) program, from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center.

For the past two months, North Coast residents have


been building Little Free Libraries that can be set up in neighborhoods as community book exchanges. The Little Free Libraries are being auctioned off, and all of the proceeds will go to ROCC. At the event, there is also a silent auction of items donated by local businesses and artists.

ROCC provides free library cards for kids in

Clatsop County who are not served by a city library, and runs a countywide summer reading program and courier service between Clatsop County schools and public libraries.

For information, call the Astoria Public Library at 503-325-7323, the Seaside Public Library at 503-738-6742 or the Warrenton Public Library at 503-861-3919.

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