

# On-time graduation rates increase for Native students

By Danielle Harrison

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Tribal students have rebounded since the COVID-19 pandemic, posting graduation rates that are in line with those during the 2018-19 school year, according to information released by the Oregon Department of Education.

“As a district we have been diligently working on the goals outlined in our continuous improvement plan,” Willamina School District Superintendent Carrie Zimbrick said. “Especially improving student outcomes in core classes, with an emphasis on literacy and math and improving the culture of our school environment.”

The Education Department released its school and district report cards on Thursday, Oct. 20, which are intended to provide a snapshot of information to local communities. The profiles include statistics on school attendance, district demographics, graduation rates for different racial and ethnic groups, career and technical education courses, advanced course work and extracurricular opportunities.

The Willamina School District estimates are that approximately 40 percent of the students are Native American, with most being Grand Ronde Tribal members or descendants.

In 2022, Willamina Native students’ on-time graduation rate was 86 percent, up from 73 the previous year. Eighty-eight percent of ninth-grade Native students were on-track to graduate, compared with 71 percent the year before.

The 2022 statewide profile has

not been released yet, so comparison statistics were unavailable. However, an Education Department press release noted that ninth grade on-track graduation rates rose 9 percent in 2022, although this is still not quite at pre-pandemic levels.

“While we must continue to back students with the academic, social, emotional and mental health support they need, it’s encouraging to see the critical ninth grade on-track numbers rise as students returned to in-person instruction,” Oregon Department of Education Director Colt Gill said. “Daily in-person instruction helps students receive the close attention and support they need to learn and thrive. The more students can come to school, the more we can meet their individual needs and help them succeed.”

Zimbrick said that Willamina High School has a student success team that meets monthly and focuses on ensuring students graduate on time.

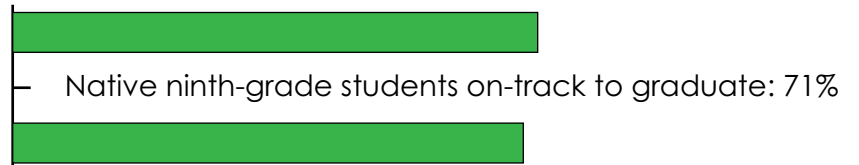
“All students have an advisory teacher that helps support academic plans,” she said. “We also hired a full-time academic guidance counselor that meets with students individually to plan a path to graduation and beyond. Bottom line: Our entire staff is committed to student success and go above and beyond to support students.”

The state has set a goal of a 90 percent on-time graduation rate by 2025. Zimbrick said continuing to focus on improvement will help the district reach that goal, along with offering expanded courses in career and technical education.

## OREGON SCHOOL REPORT CARDS:

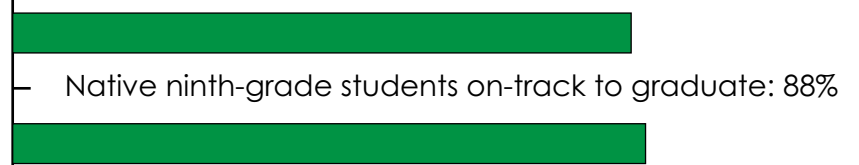
### 2021 Willamina School District

Native students on-time graduation: 73%



### 2022 Willamina School District

Native students on-time graduation: 86%



### Statewide 2021

Native students on-time graduation: 67%



0 20 40 60 80 100

\*2022 statewide statistics are not yet available.

Graph by Samuel Briggs III

“One hundred percent of our students that take CTE (Career Technical Education) classes graduate on time,” she said. “We are seeing a rise in the number of students taking the classes at Willamina High School.”

Currently, the high school has two full-time CTE instructors and

students can choose from classes in construction, welding, drones, woodworking, small engine repair, horticulture, ag-science, veterinary science and robotics.

For more information, visit [oregon.gov/ode/schools-and-districts/reportcards](http://oregon.gov/ode/schools-and-districts/reportcards). ■

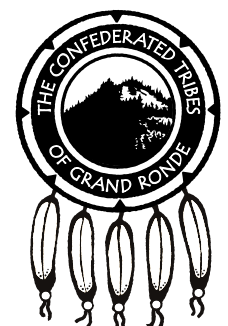


Red Fox James at the White House, 1915

## American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month:

NOVEMBER 2022

In 1990, more than seven decades later, then-President George H.W. Bush signed a joint congressional resolution designating the month of November, National American Indian Heritage Month. Similar proclamations have been issued every year since 1994 to recognize what is now called, American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month.



The first American Indian Day was celebrated in May 1916 in New York. The event culminated an effort by Red Fox James, a member of the Blackfeet Nation, who rode across the nation on horseback seeking approval from 24 state governments to have a day to honor American Indians.

**3.7 million**

The nation’s American Indian and Alaska Native population alone in 2020. This population group identifies as AIAN only and did not identify with any other race.

**574**

The number of federally recognized Indian tribes in 2022.

**120,944**

The number of single-race American Indian and Alaska Native veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces in 2021.



Blackfeet Nation, Montana



**324**

The number of distinct, federally recognized American Indian reservations in 2022, including federal reservations and off-reservation trust land.

**10.1 million**

The projected American Indian and Alaska Native population alone or in combination with other race groups on July 1, 2060, about 2.5% of the projected total U.S. population.



See a detailed profile of the American Indian and Alaska Native population alone or in combination with one or more other races from the 2020 Census and the 2021 American Community Survey at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).