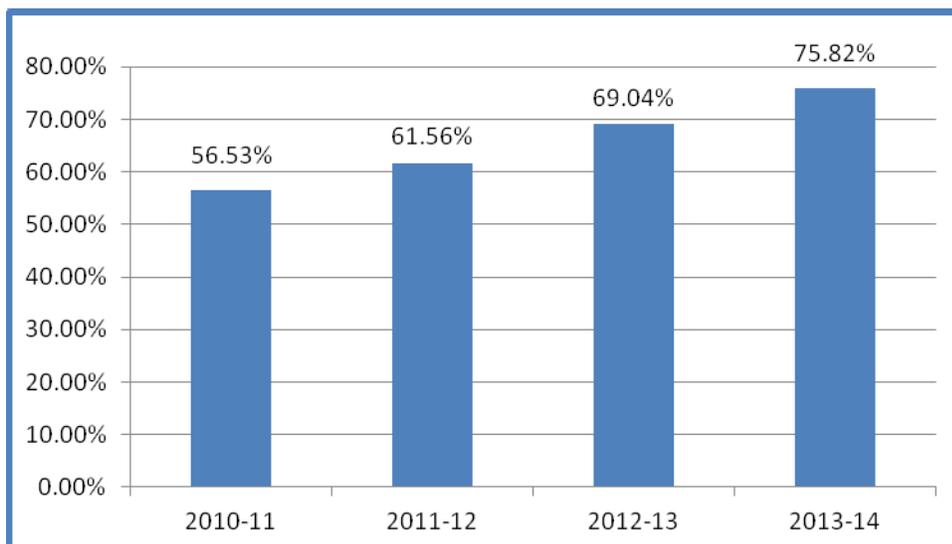




March 6, 2015

KFCS' District Newsletter
By Paul Hillyer, KFCS' Superintendent
Slow and Steady Wins the Race

KLAMATH FALLS CITY SCHOOLS' FIVE-YEAR COMPLETER RATES



In the race between the hare and the tortoise, the tortoise wins. He does so not because he is the fastest creature in the forest. Rather, it is his persistence that wins out. The same can be said about the improvement we are seeing in our high school completion rates. Since we started our focus on improvement in this area four years ago, we have seen almost a 20% improvement. The improvement may not be as fast as we would like, but it has been steady.

The graph above shows the growth trend we have seen in the 5-year high school completer rate. This rate includes students who have earned a high school diploma or a GED. In the 2010-11 school year the 5-year completer rate was 56.53%.

Because of this frightening failure rate, the school board set a district-wide goal of improving to 100%. Many people in looking at this problem thought shooting for such a high number was crazy. They are being proven wrong. We may not be at 100%; however, like that tortoise, we are making steady progress. Last year we accomplished a 75.82% completer rate.

How was this improvement accomplished? It has been a team effort with each school working with parents and students to help them set goals and understand how important high school

graduation is. The district has also been very determined in the use of tutoring and support help both during the school day and after school to help students improve in math and reading.

Another important step in the district has been a closer tracking of student progress in all subjects and reporting the accurate status of each learner to the students and the parents through report cards and conferences. Teachers and principals have also created a much greater emphasis not only on high school graduation but also on creating a college-going culture in the district. They have stressed the importance of having a good job in order to exit poverty and become contributing members of society.

A third district effort that has contributed to this improvement is the hard work all schools are doing to improve attendance. Being in school is perhaps the most important way to become a successful student. Schools are fighting hard against chronic absenteeism every school day.

The district has also instituted the after-school program through a \$2.5 million federal grant. These funds allow schools to provide academic supports after the school day. They also allow sites to provide interesting activities in art, science, technology and physical fitness that makes being in school more motivating for students.

Another grant has allowed the district to implement the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Program across our schools. This program helps us develop the college-going culture in all schools while also helping teachers develop engaging classroom practices that raise the level of thinking and communication in our schools. It also provides elective classes for students whose families have never had a college graduate.

The Klamath Promise Initiative has been another key component in improving graduation rates in the community. About two years ago, our district started this effort by inviting 25 community leaders to join us in helping our students achieve academic success as measured by an improved graduation rate. Since that time, more leaders, now representing about 40 organizations, have been meeting monthly and working together to create a vision of educational success in our community. Through their ongoing work, higher expectations for academic attainment and new hope for the community have risen from the ashes of community despair and dysfunction.

While there is much work still to do, there is also a great deal about which to be optimistic. We need only to be like our four-footed friend and be persistent in our efforts to help students succeed. If we keep our goal in sight and if we do not waiver in our commitment, it will not be long before we are crossing the 100% graduation finish line. Thanks for all you do to help us in this critical work!

Other News:

1. Two great community friends of education passed away in February. Tim Amuchastegui and Ed Caleb will be greatly missed by Klamath Falls.
2. Enrollment continues to grow in our district. We have 92 more students right now than we had last year at this time. Enrollment is 3024.
3. On April 28th at noon, we will have the KU groundbreaking ceremony.
4. KFCS has earned an A+ bond rating through their careful budget management over the last five years. This strong bond rating helped the district take advantage of low interest rates that will result in extra dollars from the bond sale for other district projects.

5. KU is working with KCC and the KCS D to develop more dual-credit classes for students. This will also help students get into elective "pathways" that will lead to certificates, AA degrees, and 4-year college degrees that provide excellent options for their future life success.
6. Oregon Community Foundation has donated 500 dental kits for our after-school program. OIT dental hygiene program was also there and it is this partnership with their hygiene program serving and Mills, Conger, and Pelican after school that was helpful in obtaining these kits. They have toothbrushes, floss, a timer, toothpaste all in a pouch with bilingual brushing instructions. We will also distribute to our PMS 6th graders.
7. **We have made the top five OSAA Spirit Video list** for the second year in a row. It is now time to vote. Please go to the link below - watch the video - and select "like." Selecting "like" means you have voted for our video. The contest ends March 18th (end of day) and the school with the most votes wins the state championship. As always, we are competing with schools that are larger than us - with more population - so getting out the vote really matters. I ask that all of you tell all your friends and family - to vote by watching the video at the OSAA site and selecting "like." Send out by Facebook - cell phone text - twitter - every means possible. Last year we won with almost 1200 votes. This year's goal is 2500 "like" votes. Sooooo ... "on you mark - get set – goooooo!!!" There are two (2) ways to access KU's Spirit Video:
 - 1) • **Click on the link below.** It will take you to the OSAA video page. We are the 4th video called 2015 Spirit Video Youtube HQ.
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFkJkCTa9Oo_U8zgBguvM0zgB1d5y1tVK
 - Watch the video (3 minutes). Vote by hitting "**Like**"
 - To win, we have to get the most "likes"
 - 2) •**Go to YouTube**
 - Type in 2015 Spirit Video YouTube HQ
 - The top video is our video. Watch the video (3 minutes). Vote by hitting "Like"
 - To win, we have to get the most "likes"
8. Some job openings currently posted in KFCS:
 - After School Program - Teacher/Mentor - (Open until filled)
 - Assistant Principal - Klamath Union High School (Open until filled)
 - Physics Teacher (Open until filled)
 - Advanced Math - TWO POSITIONS (Open until filled)
 - Principal - Conger Elementary School (Open until filled)
 - Speech Language Pathologist - Early Childhood Intervention (Open until closed)
 - Elementary Music Teacher - (Open until filled)
 - Academic Instructor - 1st Grade - Pelican (Open until filled)

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