

## Oregon Students Continue to Improve On-Time Graduation Rate

Oregon's on-time graduation rate reached 75% in 2015-16, an increase of about 1% from the previous school year.<sup>1</sup> The increase equates to more than 1,300 additional students earning their diploma compared to last year. Nearly all student groups saw an increase in their graduation rate, with Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, African American/Black, and Hispanic students, Ever English Learners (students who are now or ever have been classified as English Language Learners) and Students with Disabilities showing the largest gains. Career and Technical

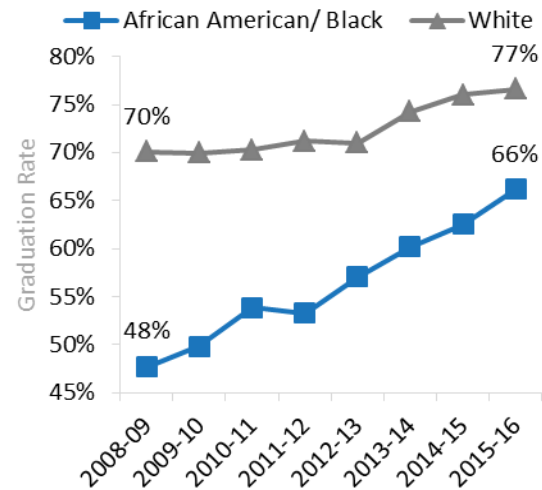
**Exhibit 1: Change in Graduation Rates by Student Groups**

	2014-15	2015-16	Change*
All Students	73.8	74.8	1.0
Male	70.1	71.4	1.4
Female	77.8	78.4	0.7
Am. Indian/Alaska Native	55.0	56.4	1.5
Asian	87.5	88.0	0.5
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	63.2	70.1	6.9
African American/Black	62.6	66.2	3.6
Hispanic	67.4	69.4	2.1
White	76.0	76.6	0.6
Multi-Ethnic	72.7	74.4	1.8
Econ. Disadvantaged	66.4	68.1	1.6
Not Econ. Disadvantaged	83.3	83.8	0.5
Current English Learner	51.2	52.9	1.7
Ever English Learner	66.9	71.1	4.2
Not an English Learner	75.0	75.8	0.8
Students w/ Disabilities	52.7	55.5	2.8
Students w/o Disabilities	77.3	78.1	0.8
Talented and Gifted	93.2	92.7	-0.5
Not Talented and Gifted	71.9	73.0	1.2
CTE Participants	*	85.4	*
CTE Concentrators	*	90.7	*

\*The change does not exactly equal the difference between 2014-15 and 2015-16 in all cases due to rounding error.

<sup>1</sup> On-time graduation is defined as students who graduate within four years of entering high school.

**Exhibit 2: African American/Black Students Continue to Narrow the Achievement Gap**



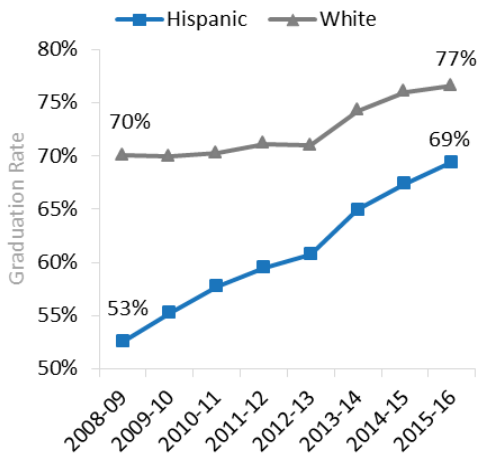
Education (CTE) participants and CTE concentrators, an additional student group reported this year, show graduation rates above 85% and 90% respectively.

### African American/Black and Hispanic Students Continue to Narrow the Graduation Achievement Gap

The overall graduation rate for African American/Black students reached 66% in 2015-16, about 9 percentage points lower than the statewide average. The gap in rates between African American/Black and White students narrowed to 10 percentage points, down from a 22 percentage point gap in 2008-09.<sup>2</sup> One factor contributing to the improving rates of African American/Black students was a leap in the rate of African American/Black male students that graduated on-time. African American/Black male students improved their graduation rate by about 5 percentage points from last year and 10 percentage points since the 2013-14 school year, reaching a graduation rate of 64% in 2015-16.

<sup>2</sup> ODE began tracking the adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate for students who entered high school in 2005-06. Students who graduated on-time from this cohort graduated in 2008-09.

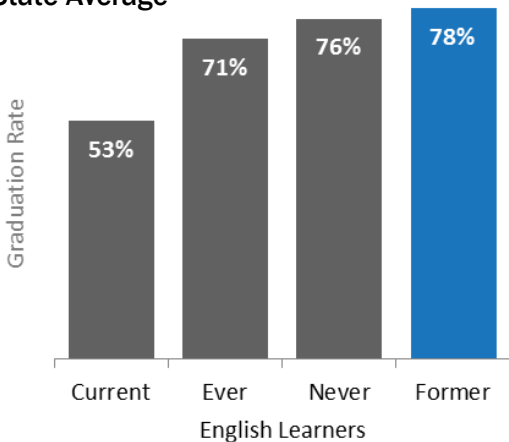
**Exhibit 3: The Achievement Gap between Hispanic and White Students Continues to Narrow**



African American/Black female students' graduation rate increased by 2 percentage points from last year, reaching 69% in the 2015-16 school year.

The overall graduation rate for Hispanic students reached 69% in the 2015-16 school year. The gap between Hispanic and White students is also declining, shrinking from 18 percentage points in 2008-09 to 7 percentage points in 2015-16. The continued increase in graduation rates for former English Learners (ELs) is one factor pushing the overall Hispanic graduation rate higher. About 43% of Hispanic students in the cohort were former ELs, and another 14% were

**Exhibit 4: Former English Learners Continue to Graduate a Rate Higher than the Overall State Average**



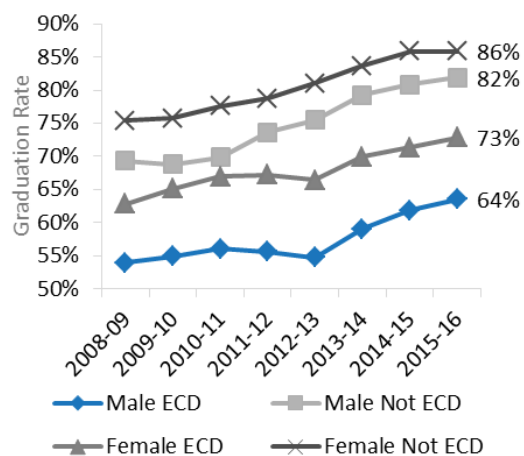
current ELs. While students who enter high school still needing English language development services had an on-time graduation rate of 53%, former English Learners graduated at a rate of 78%, two percentage points higher than the overall state average.

**Economically Disadvantaged Students Continue to Struggle**

Economically disadvantaged (ECD) students graduated at a rate of 68%, about 16 percentage points lower than not economically disadvantaged students. The gap between economically disadvantaged students and their peers has been particularly difficult to narrow, having fluctuated over the past 8 years to as to as many as 18 percentage points and as few as 12 percentage points.

Looking deeper into this gap, economically disadvantaged males lag far behind all other students, with a graduation rate of 64% in 2015-16. The graduation rate for economically disadvantaged females is also below the state average, but is about 9 percentage points higher than that of economically disadvantaged males. The gender gap for not economically disadvantaged students is much smaller.

**Exhibit 5: Graduation Rates of Economically Disadvantaged Students, Especially Males, Lag Behind their Peers**



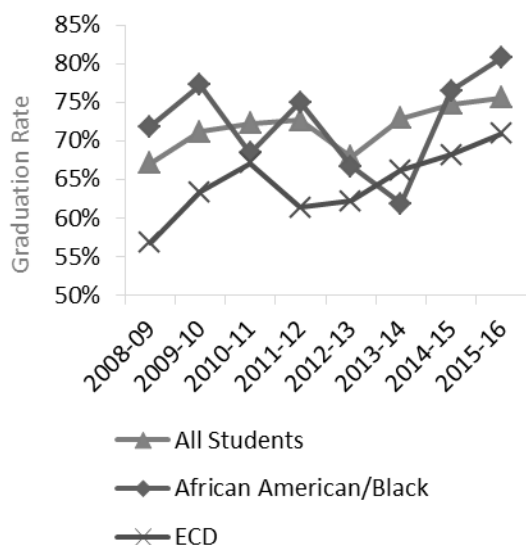
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## Examples of Success from Oregon High Schools

ODE staff spoke with principals from ten high schools that have significantly improved their graduation rates, consistently maintained high graduation rates, or have narrowed the gap in graduation rates among student groups. The following summaries share highlights from the interviews with Aloha High School in Beaverton, Canby High School, Century High School in Hillsboro, David Douglas High School in east Portland, Jefferson High School in Jefferson, Lebanon High School, Milwaukie High School, Oakland High School, Parkrose High School in east Portland, and Wilson High School in Portland. While different strategies and methods were used in each school, some themes that emerged in multiple schools included:

- Quality staff committed to continuously improving instruction,
- Using data systematically to drive decision-making processes,
- Providing a variety of electives and other activities to engage students, and
- A focus on addressing students' non-academic needs.

**Exhibit A: Aloha High School Graduation Rates, Select Student Groups**



### Aloha High School – Beaverton School District

Aloha High School's overall graduation rate reached 76% in 2015-16. Graduation rates for economically disadvantaged students have been rising since 2012-13, climbing from 61% to 71%. Graduation rates for African American/Black students have improved over the last 2 years, rising from 62% to 81%.

One priority for Aloha staff is to make the school a nurturing, kind, safe, and positive space for all students. Students come to school with a

variety of social/emotional, mental health, and other basic needs that must be addressed so that they can focus on learning. Aloha partners with local businesses and churches to make sure students have clothing, enough to eat, and necessary school supplies. Many students take a wellness class where they learn about things like yoga and mindfulness. In addition, two social workers are on staff to help students navigate these challenges.

Aloha staff also focus on developing "grit" and a growth mindset in students. They help students discover their passion and then teach them how hard they will need to work to succeed. The school honors 12 students three times a year for their grit or their ability to succeed despite difficult circumstances. Aloha alums who are excelling and personifying a commitment to excellence are highlighted through a series of interviews and videos that are then shared with students.

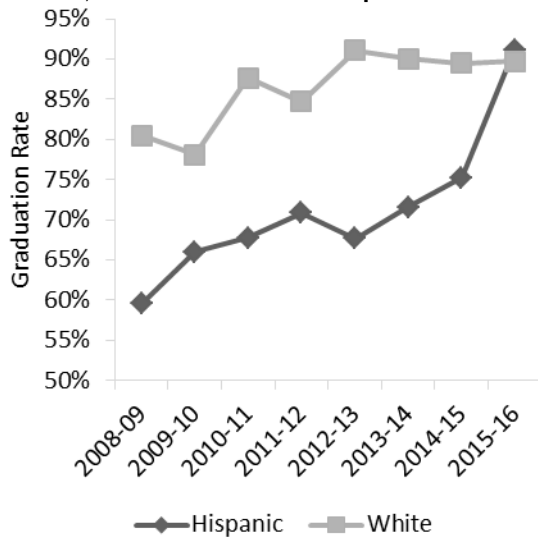
Finally, Principal Kenneth Yarnell praised the quality of instruction Aloha's teachers provide students. Over the past few years, teachers started using the Advanced Via Individual Determination (AVID) framework to hone their skills and develop new ways to engage students. Aloha's leadership team believes that change in graduation rates is dependent on quality

instruction. Therefore, every effort should be made to support and encourage teachers.

### Canby High School – Canby School District

Canby High School has made steady progress in closing the high school graduation rate for Hispanic students. In 2008-09 the graduation rate gap between Hispanic and white students was 21 percentage points. The gap decreased and increased slightly through 2012-13, then over the next three years closed completely. In 2015-16, the Hispanic graduation rate was 91 percent, more than a full percentage point higher than the rate for white students.

**Exhibit B: Canby High School Graduation Rates, Select Students Groups**



Greg Dinse, who is in his second year as principal of Canby High School, cites a number of factors for their progress. All ninth-graders start with freshman orientation, a mandatory after-school program, meeting two days a week, that gives students a strong start in high school.

Canby has made student equity a priority. All staff receive equity training—and the school looks for candidates with an equity focus when hiring new staff—all with the goal of reducing student achievement gaps. As part of its gap-closing efforts, the school has concentrated on Latino students over the past 5 years, creating a

student advisory council and a club to specifically get input from Latino students.

Principal Dinse also credits Canby’s CTE program for a significant share of the school’s success. By marrying their CTE program with the school’s career center, they help students keep a focus on what comes after high school. Canby also helps reinforce student career aspirations with the state’s largest ASPIRE mentoring program and with tutoring centers in science, math, and English language arts that provide academic support in the context of students’ career goals.

Taken together, these efforts at Canby High School, along with a growing sense of community solidarity and support, have succeeded in eliminating the graduation rate gap between Latino and other students. Students and staff at Canby High School call this **CATS**—**Cougars Achieving Together = Success**.

### Century High School – Hillsboro School District

Century High School principal Martha Guise attributes her school’s success to strong collaboration among staff and to a strong AVID program that has been at the school for 9 years. As a result, Century has consistently had a high overall graduation rate and also has closed the

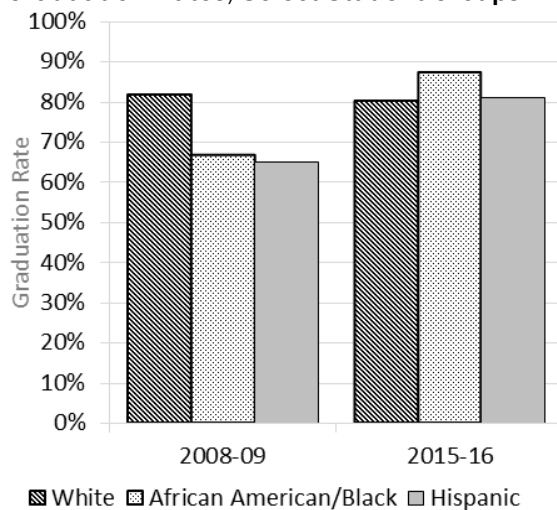
**Exhibit C: Century High School Graduation Rates, by Gender**



gap for African American/Black students, Hispanic students, and male students.

Principal Guise says the school’s success is a result of ongoing work that continually refines practices that show results. One example is the school’s credit recovery program, called “Options,” which focuses on gaining academic proficiency rather than simply gaining credit. Another key practice is the “Care Team” model where counselors, administrators, case managers, school resource officers, and other community partners focus on indicators of student disengagement so they can intervene early. The school also has a “care coordinator,” one of 4 in the district who coordinate community resources to assist students and their families.

**Exhibit D: Century High School  
Graduation Rates, Select Student Groups**



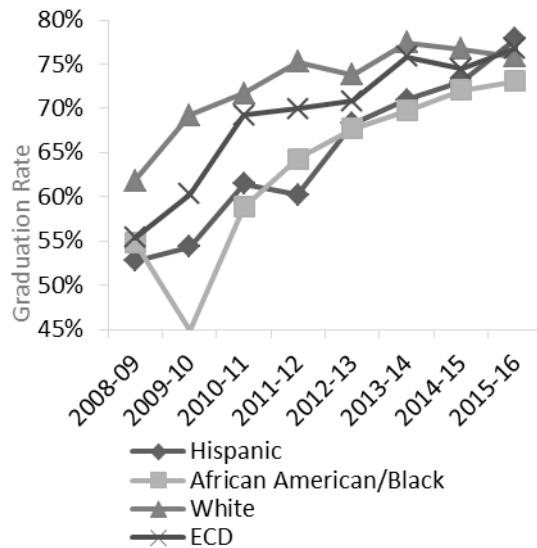
In 2015-16, 63% of Century’s seniors applied to college, and in 2016-17 it reached 100%. Principal Guise attributes that increase to counselors, who she describes as the key to effective student engagement in college and career planning. Century also promotes engagement in athletics, activities, and a variety of clubs based on student interest.

**David Douglas High School  
– David Douglas School District**

David Douglas High School continued to show impressive growth in its overall graduation rate,

which reached 77% in 2015-16. Growth in many student groups contributed to the overall growth. The graduation rate for African American/Black students reached 73%, Hispanic students reached 78%, and economically disadvantaged students reached 77%.

**Exhibit E: David Douglas High School  
Graduation Rates, Select Student Groups**



Principal John Bier explained that this year was the first year of a three-year goal to raise their graduation rate above the national average. Quality staff, data-driven practices, and being creative about getting kids on-track all help students at David Douglas succeed.

Bier said, “We have really good teachers. In terms of execution of lessons, but also in terms of how relational they are with kids.” Staff continually work on improving instruction. Most teachers have been trained using ‘Constructing Meaning’ over the past few years, a particular instructional method that is working well at David Douglas. They are successfully engaging students using well-crafted lessons and by showing a passion for their subject. This helps teachers build strong connections with students.

The school’s data team reviews student data in detail every month to make sure students are staying on-track. The credit retrieval program has been particularly helpful in helping students who



do get off-track.

A big piece of keeping students on-track is keeping them engaged. David Douglas has a variety of after-school and summer school activities. Some of these are made possible by a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning grant. In addition, leaders are working on providing more CTE classes. All of these options help students find connection points with the school and help them stay engaged.

### Jefferson High School – Jefferson School District

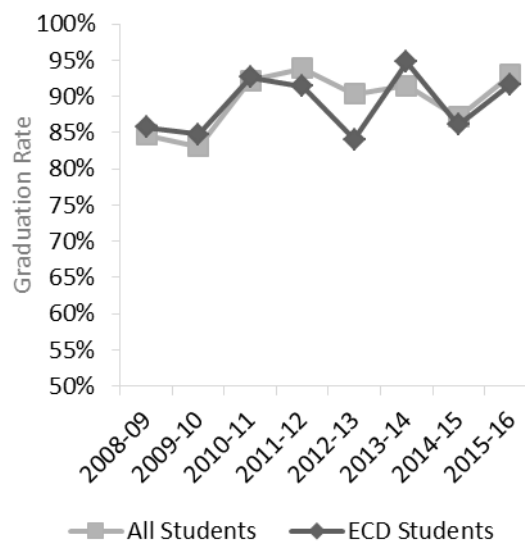
Jefferson High School’s overall graduation rate and its graduation rate for students who are economically disadvantaged has remained above 80% over the last eight years. The graduation rate overall was 93% in 2015-16, and 92% for economically disadvantaged students.

Cathy Emmert remembers her staff being very motivated to improve graduation rates when she became principal at Jefferson High School. They all agreed it was time to make some changes to make sure more students graduated. Some of the key strategies that led to the improvement include focusing on keeping students on-track from the start, providing teachers with regular time to collaborate and develop interventions, and providing engaging classes and opportunities beyond the core subject areas.

At the core of the school’s transformation is the PRIDE period. During this daily period, students meet with staff and adults in small groups to receive help in the subjects they need. Students also review grades with a staff member weekly during this period. Ratios of students to adults are lowest for freshman, about 10 to 1, because keeping students on-track at from the start is a key step to graduation.

Another key to Jefferson’s success is providing time for teachers to meet on a weekly basis in professional learning communities. During these meetings, teachers review student data, identify

**Exhibit F: Jefferson High School  
Graduation Rates, Select Student Groups**



interventions for the classroom, and collaborate to find other ways to help students succeed.

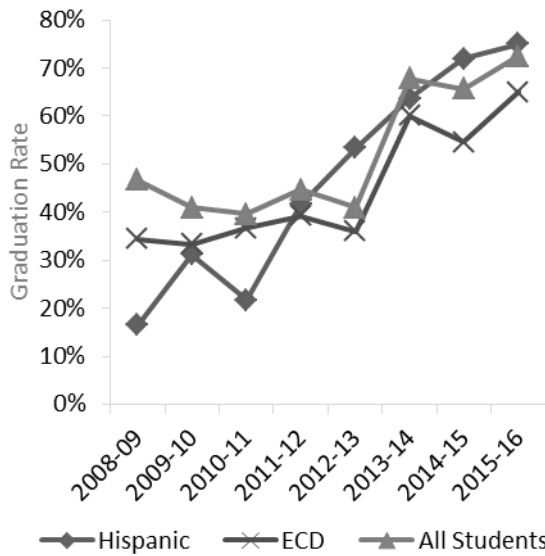
Jefferson has also maintained a wide variety of electives and clubs to help keep students engaged. Principal Emmert noted they even have a Race Car Club.

### Lebanon High School – Lebanon School District

Lebanon High School’s Hispanic student population grew from 13% of the total to 29% between 2008-09 and 2015-16. Over that period, the graduation rate for Hispanic students rose from 16% to 75%, a rate higher than for the overall student population. The rate for Lebanon’s economically disadvantaged students also rose dramatically, from 34% to 65%.

The school’s principal, Brad Shreve, attributes much of Lebanon High’s success to partnerships with AVID, Equal Opportunity Schools, and the College Board. Working with these organizations, Lebanon has increased the number of students taking Advanced Placement (AP) courses and has helped shift the school’s values, culture, and mindset to one of high expectations for achievement among students and staff. The number of students taking AP

**Exhibit G: Lebanon High School  
Graduation Rates, Select Student Groups**



classes has quadrupled in the past 4 years. Staff provide extra support for struggling students, and each student has two adults following their progress so help can be provided early.

The school has also started Latino affinity group meetings (with translators) and AVID parents' nights to help engage parents more closely in their children's education. Principal Shreve also says a thriving CTE program and electives such as music, art, and drama help keep school relevant for students.

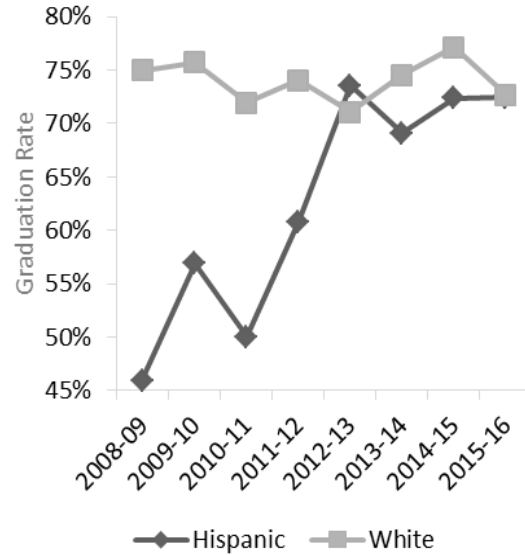
**Milwaukie High School  
– North Clackamas School District**

Milwaukie High School's graduation rate for Hispanic students was 46% in 2008-09 but reached 72% in 2014-15 and remained there in 2015-16. That dramatic increase closed the gap between Hispanic and white students from nearly 29 percentage points in 2008-09 to **less than 1 percentage point** in 2015-16. Principal Mark Pinder attributes Milwaukie's success primarily to a district-wide focus on equity and to a staff that is culturally competent, creating a welcoming environment for both students and parents.

Keys to helping to create this more welcoming

environment are having Spanish-speaking staff to greet and assist parents and the creation of a Latino parent group. Principal Pinder also points to his staff's efforts to identify the academic subjects in which each student needs extra support, and to a positive social environment at school, as the key elements in keeping students engaged and in closing the achievement gap.

**Exhibit H: Milwaukie High School  
Graduation Rates, Select Student Groups**

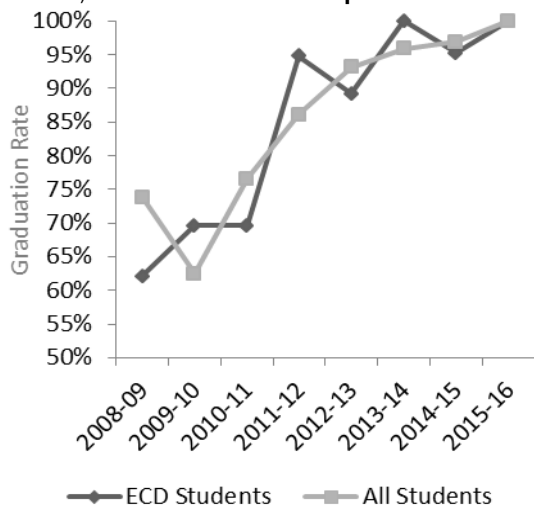


**Oakland High School  
– Oakland School District**

Oakland High School's graduation rate for all students reached 100% in the 2015-16 school year. Oakland has maintained graduation rates above 85% since the 2011-12 school year, including for economically disadvantaged students.

Principal Jeff Clark emphasized that Oakland's success comes from making each student feel "important and noticed, and still holding them accountable." Some of the strategies Clark uses to accomplish this goal at Oakland include focusing on relationships with students, monitoring data, providing a variety of electives, and a focus on engaging instruction.

**Exhibit I: Oakland High School Graduation Rates, Select Student Groups**



Clark ensures that every student has positive relationships with staff that go beyond the classroom. Many students are connected with a coach or a staff member that helps with a club. He tracks those types of relationships with a spreadsheet and then makes sure staff reach out and form connections with any student who does not appear to have a connection with an adult at the school.

Superintendent Nanette Hagen said that reviewing data and creating action plans based on those data is a core piece of Oakland’s commitment to continuous improvement at a district level. At the high school, teachers review student data in order to inform adjustments to instructional goals every 4 to 5 weeks. A key data point at Oakland is its attendance rate. The schoolwide attendance rate is posted daily. Students earn rewards, like longer lunch periods, by collectively meeting or exceeding the school’s attendance goals.

Student engagement is also a priority. For one of their newest improvement efforts, Oakland is partnering with the Institute for Research and Reform in Education to work on student engagement and to make instruction more student-centered. Oakland works hard to maintain a wide variety of electives and clubs, including art, band, and shop. Student

engagement is a key to success both inside and outside the classroom.

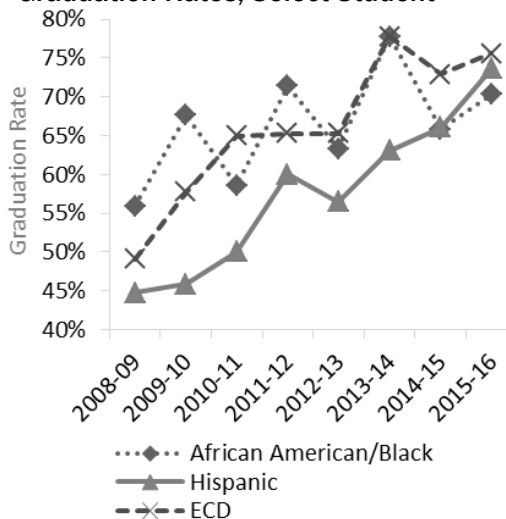
**Parkrose High School**  
**– Parkrose School District**

At Parkrose High School, the graduation rate for African American/Black students increased 4 percentage points to 70%; the graduation rate for Hispanic students increased by 8 percentage points to 74%; and the graduation rate for economically disadvantaged students increased 3 percentage points to 76%. Even more impressive, the eight-year gains for African American/Black, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students were 14, 29, and 27 percentage points respectively.

Parkrose’s teachers are at the heart of the transformation. Principal Molly Ouche said she has teachers who look at student data and are not satisfied with what they see. Ouche said,

“We are committed to improving our outcomes for all students by refining instruction.” Implementing AVID in the school has made a big impact. Parkrose first started using AVID about 8 years ago. At the time, about 10% of students participated in an AVID class. Now about 40% of students participate. Furthermore, many of the practices used in AVID are used

**Exhibit J: Parkrose High School Graduation Rates, Select Student**





schoolwide. For example, all sophomores attend a career fair and all juniors will be attending a college expo.

A focus on data has helped staff identify students who need extra support, and also to identify areas where the school can do more to encourage historically underrepresented students. Ouche explained the extent to which data guides the school's interventions, saying that staff track everything from course enrollment to which students are going to college visiting days and other career opportunities. They want to make sure that students of all backgrounds are taking advantage of the opportunities available at Parkrose.

Parkrose also takes advantage of the resources the community has to offer. Many local organizations want to partner with Parkrose students and mentor them, especially students from historically underserved groups. These and other strategic efforts to serve all students have helped Parkrose address the graduation achievement gap.

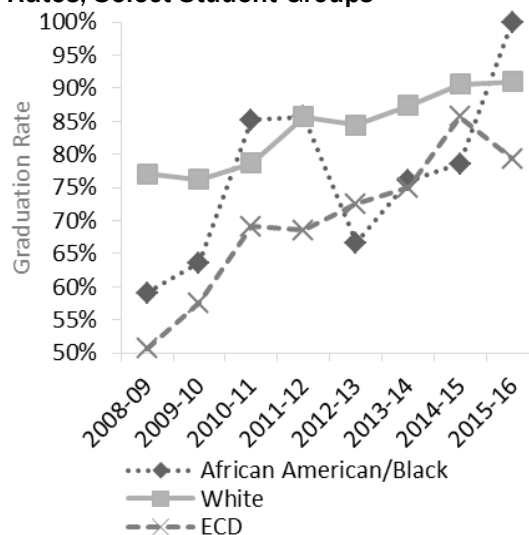
### Wilson High School – Portland Public Schools

Wilson High School in Portland Public Schools had an overall on-time graduation rate above 90% for the second year in a row. In addition, 100% of their African American/Black students graduated on-time. The rate for economically disadvantaged students declined slightly to 79%, but has increased by nearly 30 percentage points over the past 8 years.

Principal Brian Chatard became principal of Wilson High School in the 2012-13 school year. He credits much of the school's success since his arrival to his staff. They are a group of amazing professionals who are committed to collaboration, trying new ideas, and finding new ways to serve all students, he said. Chatard strives to "empower teachers to be leaders within the building."

Another key strategy has been a focus on bringing back electives, initially even at the

**Exhibit K: Wilson High School Graduation Rates, Select Student Groups**



expense of higher class sizes in core subjects. Students now have access to more CTE classes, PE electives like cross-fit and yoga, an award-winning computer science program, and more. Increasing access to AP classes was also a priority, as well as ensuring students from all backgrounds access these classes. All of these additions to course offerings help students stay engaged with school.

Wilson is working on being more proactive in taking care of the non-academic needs of its students, especially their mental and emotional health needs. From creating a peer counselling program to offering a for-credit class in mindfulness to hiring a social worker to help students with the most complex needs, staff are working hard to support students in many ways. Chatard explained, "If kids aren't getting their needs met, they won't be present for what we are trying to teach them."

Finally, all of these new efforts were possible in large part because of stable funding. Chatard explained, "I've been lucky to have become the principal at a time when the resources followed favorably." Stable funding allowed Chatard and his staff to make and maintain meaningful progress.