

Gladstone High tops state graduation rate

In 2014, Gladstone High School continued to surpass the state graduation rate by more than 9 percent, with over 81 percent of students graduating in 4 years. More than 90 percent of the GHS class of 2013 completed high school, an adult diploma, or a GED within five years.

“Our goal is that 100 percent of students will be college or career ready when they leave high school,” said Principal Natalie Osburn. “Over 90 percent of our class of 2013 met that goal. In four years, 81% of our class of 2014 met that goal. The rest may need a little extra time and support to clear the bar. ”

Gladstone High’s success is partly due to the extra help teachers provide after school each Wednesday and for three hours most Saturdays. The school also works to find each student a place to belong. Afterschool clubs, teams, and fine arts activities provide the chance to get encouragement from teachers, coaches, and mentors outside the classroom.

“The advantage of our small school is that we can build personal relationships with students to help keep them on track,” said Vice Principal Patti Alexander. “Most students graduate in four years, but some reach the goal in five. We don’t give up on any student, and will continue to work with those who have not yet graduated to help them succeed.”

Giving struggling students extra time and support to meet today’s higher graduation standards makes a significant difference to school completion. As a result, Gladstone High’s five-year graduation rate is 9 percent above the state average.

Some 95 percent of Latino students at GHS have graduated within five years, 25 percent above the state average. In addition, 92 percent of students from disadvantaged minorities have graduated within five years, 23 percent above the state average. Beyond that, 91 percent of Gladstone’s economically disadvantaged students graduate within five years, 21 percent above the state average.

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Afterschool clubs connect kids to mentors

From speech, art, and choir to book club, cheerleading, and science, this month John Wetten Elementary is launching an array of free or low-cost afterschool clubs and activities for students. The Gladstone school has the goal of connecting as many students as possible with adult mentors.

“We know that kids who participate in afterschool activities benefit in several ways that help boost their success in school,” said Lennie Bjornsen, Director of Student Supports. “Having an adult mentor, a positive peer group, skill building and career

exploration gives kids an advantage, especially between grades 4 and 12.”

Volunteer Coordinator Theresa Schmidt said that this was the first experience with an extra curricular club or activity for many of the children.

“They are excited to belong to a group, and so proud of what they’re accomplishing each week,” she said.

Most of the clubs are run by volunteers. The school hopes to add additional clubs that focus on cooking, chess, robotics, and more. To lead a small group of elementary students one or two hours a week, contact Schmidt at 503.656.6564.

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Gladstone 6th graders receive free books

Sixth graders are in a reading frenzy at Kraxberger Middle School, thanks to free books provided by The Clackamas Bookshelf. The group gathers donations of used and new books and gives them to youths in Clackamas County.

“We showed up at lunch time, and every sixth grader got to choose a book,” said the group’s leader, Katy Preston. “In time, we hope to do the same for Kraxberger 7th and 8th graders.”

The non-profit is motivated by research showing the more books kids have at home, the better their school achievement. Located in a portable classroom behind Kraxberger, they are inviting the community to their Grand Opening on Saturday, February 7 from 2 to 6 p.m. The event includes book raffles and adult book sales with all titles just 50 cents. Kraxberger is located at 17777 Webster Road in Gladstone.