



OUHSD: Turning the Vision of Post-Secondary Options for Every Student into a Reality

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There has been much community input recently about changing the Oxnard Union High School District graduation requirements to mirror the UC/CSU A-G requirements to ensure our students are able to go on to a post-secondary educational experience. White papers have been written and community meetings have been held comparing OUHSD to other large, urban school districts (like LAUSD and SDUSD), which have already aligned their graduation requirements, and therefore have a significantly higher A-G rate than OUHSD. To be clear, the Oxnard Union High School District has *the same goal*, and a strong vision of high expectations and powerful futures for *every* student.

That being said, it must also be strongly noted that all of the districts which have already aligned their graduation requirements did so over a ten-year or longer planning and implementation process, which included multiple revisions, versions and ultimately tiered graduation requirements – which give alternate options to students who struggle to meet the A-G requirements. This is not a process that happens overnight, because when the graduation requirements change without a thoroughly vetted plan for the academic, social and emotional supports to ensure students meet the more rigorous set of requirements, the graduation rate plummets, and the community suffers. Many districts have experienced a significant decrease in graduation rate after aligning to the A-G requirements and were, therefore, forced to either return to non-A-G aligned graduation requirements, or start adding alternate graduation options *after the fact*.

Knowing this, Oxnard Union High School District began two years ago developing a plan which would ensure powerful futures for all graduates – increasing the UC/CSU eligibility rate while also supporting all viable college and career pathways. We define *powerful futures* as the ability for our graduates to go on to an adult life where they are financially secure, working within the profession of their choice, as productive citizens who contribute to society and give back to the community. To achieve this vision, we are working to align our programs, curricula, instruction, services and supports to challenge each student to reach his or her own greatest potential. We believe that every child has the innate ability to achieve high levels of success and his or her own personal greatness. We understand that to increase

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student academic performance which leads to college and career readiness, we must support families and provide students with educational opportunities and access.

To accomplish this, during the last two school years, OUHSD submitted over 60 courses for UC/CSU approval to ensure our students meet the A-G requirements; provided and will continue to provide the PSAT for every student in grades 9-11; provided the SAT during the school day for every junior *free of charge* this Spring on March 7, 2018; challenged students to new heights by increasing enrollment in Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate by nearly 1,500 students per year; developed a STEM pathway to Oxnard College and California State University, Channel Islands; strengthened our 22 Linked Learning Pathways, which lead to careers in multiple fields, like teaching, nursing, culinary arts, law enforcement and business management; developed a Biliteracy Pathway which will lead to certification in interpretation services; ensured all seniors apply for a two- or four-year college and that all eligible seniors apply for the FAFSA; increased our graduation rate, college-going rate, and our A-G completion rate (which early data indicates will significantly increase again this year); and decreased our drop-out rate!

Another significant improvement for the 2017-18 school year was the expansion of our Condor High School Options Academy. This year, Condor High School Options centers are available at ACHS, CIHS, HHS, OHS, PHS and RMHS! Students who need flexible scheduling options may attend the Condor High School Options center, but still have access to electives and other classes of interest on the regular high school campus. Our goal is to provide an educational program that *fits* for every student, virtually eliminating the drop-out rate.

Collaboration with colleges, universities, community stakeholders, and advocacy groups can serve to strengthen and support our efforts to ensure powerful futures for all students, if that work is done in a spirit of open dialogue and positive intent. Anything can and will be accomplished if we work *together*.

About the Author

As a public school educator for nearly 25 years, primarily at the secondary level, Dr. DeLeon served as a high school teacher, assistant principal, principal, Secondary Instructional Specialist and Director of Professional Development, Assessment and Evaluation, before becoming Chief of Secondary Schools. She also serves as a delegate to the College Board Academic Assembly. Throughout her career, she has worked to close the achievement gap by nurturing strong parent and community engagement, while promoting a culture of collaboration, support and collegiality for all stakeholders.