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Media Contact:
Kristin Rodine
Public Information Officer
208-332-6807
krodine@sde.idaho.gov

Idaho’s 2020 graduation rates show improvement

(BOISE) – Idaho’s four-year and five-year graduation rates increased in 2020, encouraging news amid a pandemic that disrupted the end of the graduates’ senior year.

“The four-year graduation rate for the class of 2020 was 82.1 percent, up 1.4 percentage points over the previous cohort’s rate,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra said. “That’s the biggest year-to-year increase we’ve seen since the State Department of Education adjusted its calculation for cohort graduation rate in 2014.”

Class of...	Four-year Rate
2014	77.3%
2015	78.9%
2016	79.7%
2017	79.7%
2018	80.6%
2019	80.7%
2020	82.1%

“The fact that our cohort rate rose above 82 percent for the first time is a credit to the perseverance of Idaho students and teachers to make sure the pandemic’s disruptions to in-person learning did not derail the final steps toward completing high school,” Superintendent Ybarra said.

Idaho’s five-year graduation rate, measuring the percentage of students in the class of 2019 who completed high school within five years, also increased -- 83.3 percent, up from 82.8 percent the previous year. This is the third year Idaho has calculated a five-year rate to include the number of graduates who didn’t quite complete high school during the traditional four-year time frame.

Across Idaho, 60 school districts and 97 schools have four-year graduation rates of 90 percent or higher, and 17 of those districts and 22 schools boasted 100 percent graduation rates.

Many student subgroups showed an increase in their four-year graduation rate from the class of 2019 to the class of 2020. And although the two cohorts represent different groups of students, the increase in rates by demographic are worth noting. A few examples:

- The four-year graduation rate for Hispanic students increased by nearly 2 percentage points, from 73.9 percent to 75.7 percent.
- The rate for economically disadvantaged students increased by 1.3 percentage points, from 72.5 percent to 73.8 percent.
- The rate for students with disabilities increased by nearly 3 percentage points, from 56.1 percent to 59 percent. “This student group still has one of the lowest graduation rates among the student groups we report, but we hope to see increases continue for these students,” Assessment and Accountability Director Kevin Whitman said.

One surprising result among the specific student groups measured was in English language learners, whose four-year graduation rate declined from 74.4 percent in 2019 to 64.6 percent in 2020. But that dramatic drop may be attributable, at least in part, to a change in how students are identified as English learners, Whitman said, noting that the number of EL students fell from 2,360 in 2019 to 912 in 2020. Further analysis is necessary, he said.

State, district and school results for the five-year and four-year graduation rates are posted [on the SDE website](#).

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Attached: State, district and school results for the five-year and four-year graduation rates.