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OSHS GRADUATION RATE JUMPS TO OVER 90 PERCENT FOR 2018-2019 SCHOOL YEAR

The Mississippi State Board of Education voted to approve graduation rates for the 2018-2019 school year Wednesday, and *Ocean Springs School District saw an increase of 3.6% in its graduation rate, improving from 87.1% to 90.7%*

The Mississippi Department of Education calculates graduation rates following a four-year adjusted cohort method. This method determines the high school completion status for students four years after entering ninth grade for the first time, in this case, during the 2015-2016 school year, and graduated within the cohort window which ended July 31, 2019. The graduation rates for this cohort, which graduated in 2019, will be used in the 2020 accountability results.

For OSHS, this cohort included 440 students, of which 396 graduated, within the four year window.

Ocean Springs School District Superintendent Dr. Bonita Coleman noted that while a student who does not graduate in the designated time frame may count against a school's graduation rate, that does not mean a student is a dropout.

"While some of the students who do not graduate in four years do in fact become dropouts, many students do go on and become graduates in four and a half or five years," said Coleman. "These students really deserve a pat on the back for taking the extra steps necessary to graduate high school when giving up may have been the easier option. The importance of the work of the teachers and others in our schools who connect with students and support them along the way cannot be overstated."

Other students, including those receiving a GED or students who do not earn a traditional diploma, count against a school's graduation rate as well.

One noted area of significant gains for OSHS came in terms of increasing the graduation rate of students with disabilities. OSHS saw 57.9% of such students graduate within four years, an increase of 35.6 percentage points. This total bested the state average of 42%.

No matter how the calculations work or what the results turn out to be, Ocean Springs High School Principal Dr. Vickie Tiblier said her school has to do what is best to prepare students to be successful for the rest of their lives.

“Our vision at Ocean Springs High School is to prepare and provide support to our students for our ever changing world,” said Tiblier. “High schools must walk a balance of holding students accountable, preparing them for the future, and moving them forward into the future. It is a difficult task, but one we will always strive to accomplish.”

While graduation is often thought of as a high school event, Coleman stressed that a student’s entire education experience plays an important role in on-time graduation.

“High school graduation is not something that occurs only during a student’s senior year,” said Coleman. “It begins with parents preparing children to enter school in kindergarten. It continues in the classroom and at home in the years leading up to a student’s senior year. Graduation is the culmination of a child’s educational process, and it is important for everyone to work hard in every step of the process.”

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