

## Pendleton High School ASPIRE

The ASPIRE (Access to Student Assistance Programs In Reach of Everyone) program provides resources and individual assistance to students and parents to assist with post-high school education and training as well as military and employment options. ASPIRE is an OSAC (Oregon Student Access Commission) program that PHS has had available to students since 1998. Pendleton was one of the first of four pioneer sites when the program started. Over the past 18 years at PHS, ASPIRE volunteer mentors have assisted thousands of PHS graduates in meeting their educational and career goals beyond high school. Essentially, ASPIRE volunteers assist students with:



- Career exploration
- college search – 2 yr, 4 yr, trade school
- SAT & ACT test registration & preparation
- admission applications
- essays
- scholarships
- and navigating the financial aid processes – FAFSA, financial aid options

As many of you know, the variety of options, confusing processes and tough decisions of life after high school can very overwhelming. ASPIRE not only helps make this process manageable, we enable students and families to make knowledgeable, and well informed decisions so they are more likely to succeed after they leave PHS.

- Last year ASPIRE served 282 students and had an additional 5,212 student contacts
- This year ASPIRE has met with over 128 students (Sept – Dec)
- Currently 22 community volunteers help out in ASPIRE weekly – working on bringing this number back over 25

Other measurable statistics:

<b>Class Graduation Year</b>	<b>Scholarship Total</b>	<b>FAFSA Completion Rate</b>
2013	\$2,384,330	n/a
2014	\$2,202,425	56%*
2015	\$2,196,041	50%*
2016	\$2,948,410	66.6%

*\*FAFSA information for these years came from the federal government and may be a bit low because it doesn't include students who were 18 when they submitted the FAFSA.*

Oregon Promise: Last year's seniors were the first to take advantage of this program to attend Oregon Community College for nearly free. 109 of the class of 2016 filled out the application, but it is unknown how many actually took advantage of the opportunity. Although the program is awaiting legislative approval to continue next year, this year we are encouraging all eligible seniors to fill out the short application as a back-up plan. This year, 62 of our seniors have filled out the application so far.

Accomplishments this year so far:

- New FAFSA Date – after opening for years on January 1, the FAFSA opened October 1 this year. Much of my time the first few months at school this year revolved around getting families to complete their FAFSA. Our current FAFSA completion rate for seniors is 48% (as of 1/3/17).

- College Application Day – in partnership with the senior civics teachers, I was able to have 45 minutes with each senior during the first semester. This enabled each senior to have 1 class period during school dedicated to working on college applications. During this time many students completed at least one application and the Oregon Promise Application. Attendance that day was 166 (of 193).
- College Tour: In November I took 40 students on a 2-day tour to OSU, WOU, Linfield College and PSU. The trip went really well and was very informative for students.

Upcoming events this spring:

- College Fair: March 8
- College Tour: I plan to partner with our ECMC Class and take another bus full of students to see schools in the Valley
- Financial Aid Night: Feb/March
- Junior information night: April

ASPIRE Budget Update - Grants received this year:

- Safeway Foundation: \$2,500
- College Access Challenge Grant (from OSAC): \$1,000
- Education Foundation of Pendleton: \$1,500 (all for fall college tour)
- NCAA Get the Word Out: \$1,000
- Altrusa: \$300 (all for fall college tour)
- GEAR Up College Visit Grant: \$750 (for spring college tour)

Closing thought: Summer Melt - when students who leave high school with college plans never make it to campus in the fall. How can we better support our students?