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Media Release

Hillsboro School District Participates in College Opportunity Day of Action

District joins other educational leaders in announcing commitments to expand college access at White House Event

December 4, 2014, Hillsboro, OR – Today, Hillsboro School District Assistant Superintendent Steve Larson, Hillsboro Chamber President Deanna Palm, and Hillsboro City Council President and Executive Director of the Hillsboro Schools Foundation Aron Carleson will join President Obama, the First Lady, and Vice President Biden along with hundreds of college presidents and other education leaders to announce new actions to help more students prepare for and graduate from college.

The White House College Opportunity Day of Action helps support the President’s commitment to partner with colleges and universities, business leaders, and nonprofits to support students across the country to help our nation reach its goal of leading the world in college attainment.

Today’s participants were asked to commit to new action in one of four areas: building networks of colleges around promoting completion; creating K-16 partnerships around college readiness; investing in high school counselors as part of the First Lady’s Reach Higher initiative; and increasing the number of college graduates in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Hillsboro School District has already embarked upon a comprehensive plan to increase college and career readiness with its College and Career Pathways (CCP) program. The vision for CCP is to create clear and viable post-secondary pathways for all Hillsboro students in partnership with local colleges and universities, businesses and nonprofits, students, teachers, and community leaders.

Career Learning Advisory (CLA) groups have been created around the six recognized career areas: Human Resources; Health Services; Business and Management; Industrial and Engineering Systems; Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources; and Arts and Communications.

The District is committed to developing at least five new business/non-profit partnerships within each CLA for student internships and mentorship opportunities, as well as creating roadmaps for Hillsboro students to guide them from high school to postsecondary education and/or career.

The District’s goals are: 1) Ensure that all seniors have earned at least 9 college credits upon graduation; 2) Increase enrollment in 4-year institutions from 30% of the senior class (450 students) to 40% (600) by 2025; and 3) Increase enrollment in 2-year institutions from 20% of the senior class (300 students) to 40% (600) by 2025, in accordance with Oregon’s 40-40-20 goal.

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Partners in this work include District counselors, City of Hillsboro, Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce, Portland Community College, Western Oregon University, Lewis & Clark College, Linfield College, and local businesses, nonprofit organizations and community leaders.

The President will announce new steps on how his Administration is helping to support these actions, including announcing \$10 million to help promote college completion and a \$30 million AmeriCorps program that will improve low-income students' access to college. Today's event is the second College Opportunity Day of Action, and will include a progress report on the commitments made at the first day of action on January 14, 2014.

Expanding opportunity for more students to enroll and succeed in college, especially low-income and underrepresented students, is vital to building a strong economy and a strong middle class. Today, only 9 percent of those born in the lowest family income quartile attain a bachelor's degree by age 25, compared to 54 percent in the top quartile. In an effort to expand college access, the Obama Administration has increased Pell scholarships by \$1,000 a year, created the new American Opportunity Tax Credit worth up to \$10,000 over four years of college, limited student loan payments to 10 percent of income, and laid out an ambitious agenda to reduce college costs and promote innovation and competition.

The event will be streamed live at WhiteHouse.gov/College-Opportunity.

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