

Graduation rates go up around the Valley

By Hannah
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It is encouraging that many Valley high school districts are out-performing the statewide graduation rate, which inched up from 80.4% for the 2012-13 school year to 80.8% for the last school year.

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Graduation rates across the central San Joaquin Valley

District	Graduation Rate
Central Unified	81.1%
Clovis Unified	92.1%
Fresno Unified	79.3%
Hanford Joint Union	90.5%
Madera Unified	86.9%
Porterville Unified	84.3%
Sanger Unified	92.2%
Visalia Unified	92%

Source: California Department of Education

Graduation rates improved at several central San Joaquin Valley school districts, state data released Tuesday shows, in line with a small overall increase in the statewide average and big jumps at other local districts like Fresno Unified.

In both [Madera](#) and [Visalia](#) unifieds, rates jumped by at least 3.5 percentage points. About 92% of Visalia seniors graduated last school year, a huge jump from just five years ago when less than 80% graduated.

Statewide, graduation rates improved from 80.4% in the 2012-13 school year to 80.8% last school year. [Fresno](#), [Central](#), [Sanger](#) and [Clovis](#) unifieds released their data on Monday.

In Visalia, Superintendent Craig Wheaton said maintaining a laser focus on students at the greatest risk of dropping out, like those in independent study or in alternative programs, has helped improve the rate. He also pointed to a cultural shift and more teacher training.

“There’s not one thing we’re doing,” he said. “The overriding theme is, we’ve developed this sense that we don’t give up on kids. All the way from teachers designing lessons, then trying to teach. If kids are not being successful, I consider us not being successful.”

Madera Unified’s graduation rate went from 83.4% in 2012-13 to 86.9% last school year.

The district has put more money into students who have historically performed below their peers, like those still learning English, Superintendent Ed Gonzalez said. Allowing those students to take more electives in place of additional language classes has helped keep them engaged and in class, he said.

Graduation rates also ticked upward at [Hanford Joint Union High School District](#) and [Porterville Unified](#). About 84.3% of last year’s Porterville seniors graduated, compared to 83.7% in 2013. In Hanford, 90.5% of seniors graduated last year, up from 88.1% the year before.

More teacher training and giving students who failed classes more ways to gain those credits has helped, Hanford Superintendent Bill Fishbough said. Some students are now going online to take classes they previously flunked.

“It allows students to take the classes while continuing their progress in other core” subjects, he said.

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