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Brookings-Harbor Voices PSA - Poverty

Hello, this is Sean Gallagher – Superintendent of Brookings Harbor School District here to talk to you about a systemic challenge for both our school district and community, that is Poverty.

What is poverty? Poverty is defined at the federal level as “an economic state”, or “the overall of income”. In 2015, the official poverty threshold for a family of four living in the United States (i.e. two adults, two children) was \$24,036. As a school district, we do not single out students of poverty, but we do make several efforts to create programs that are available to everyone to benefit all, including students in poverty.

How does a school district know that they have students in attendance that live in poverty? A school district uses data produced from Free and Reduced Lunch applications and a state reported factor called Economically Disadvantaged to get a sense of what percentage of attending students actually live in poverty.

Across the nation, census data indicates that 51% of public education students are considered low income, Oregon’s low income rate is 49%. For BHSD 58% of attending students are considered economically disadvantaged.

BHSD17C provides lots of programs that are available to everyone that directly counteracts the symptoms of poverty and allows all students to equitably participate. Some examples are: Extended school day programs like after school and/or a summer school programs with transportation & food services, increasing instructional minutes across the district, providing alternative education programs, strong Career Technical Education programs like construction, welding, or robotics; access to school counselors; access to mental and physical health services like the School Based Health Center; and access to technology in every classroom like Smartboards, Chromebooks, or computers.

Thank you for your time today as you listen to a very difficult subject to discuss, I will be talking more about Poverty during future Voices Radio broadcasts. Our focused attention to poverty helps Every Student To Succeed here at Brookings-Harbor School District.