



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*Reynolds High School Students Excel Through Portland Urban Debate League,
Qualify for State Championship Debate Tournament*

April 15, 2021, Fairview, OR – Two Reynolds High School students, Destiny Tran and Jeff Cervantes Mendoza, placed first at the Oregon Student Activities Association district debate tournament and will represent the region at the state championship tournament on April 22-24. After several years of dormancy, Reynolds’ debate program was restarted in the 2019-2020 school year through a partnership with a local nonprofit, Portland Urban Debate League.

“We are proud to see our students excel outside the classroom activities such as debate and appreciate the partnership with the Portland Urban Debate League to make these opportunities available to our students,” stated Dr. Danna Diaz, Superintendent of Schools, Reynolds School District.

Tran and Cervantes are now in their second year of competition. This year’s debate topic focused on criminal justice reform with students debating both sides of the resolution. When taking the affirmative side of the topic, the debates argued that the United States should eliminate mandatory minimum sentences and expand rehabilitation programs for people leaving prison.

“Debate provides critical skills for students in public policy, effective advocacy, and leadership development, but unfortunately most Portland-area schools no longer offer debate competition,” states Jake Weigler, President, Portland Urban Debate League. Weigler added, “We have been honored to be partners with Reynolds to restore this program and pleased to see its competitive success.”

About [Reynolds School District](#):

As a community, we prepare lifelong learners to achieve their full potential in a complex and interconnected world. Reynolds School District recognizes the diversity and worth of all individuals and groups in our society. Reynolds School District Board of Education ensures that all educational programs, activities and employment will be free of discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, parental or marital status, or age.

About Portland Urban Debate League:

To create a thriving debate community, in which engaged students are partnered with trained coaches, the Portland Urban Debate League provides workshops and evidence to students, continuing education and curricular materials to coaches, and debate competitions with experienced judges throughout the school year. These resources are free or low-cost for member schools and available for purchase by non-member schools. The PUDL is committed to sharing expertise and ideas between programs, to mentoring and support, and to further discussions about debate and education.

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