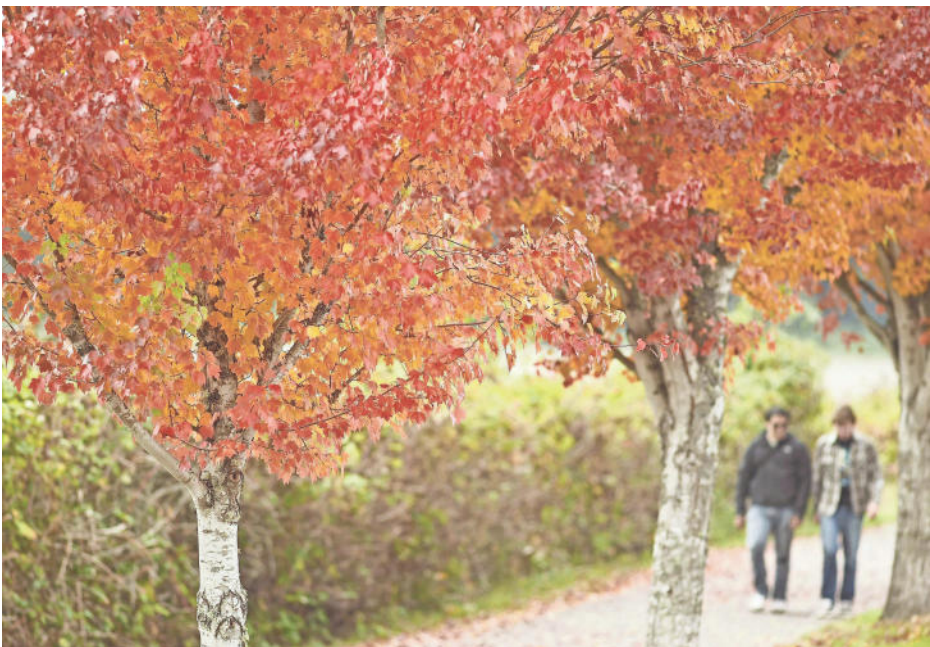




The fall colors along Minto Island Road in the Minto-Brown Island Park generally peak in late October. STATESMAN JOURNAL FILE

Fall

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peak coming around the last week of October.

Bush’s Pasture Park

The famous historical park in downtown Salem also is beginning to turn from green to gold, with peak also expected toward the end of October.

The Court-Chemeketa Historic District

A collection of 12 blocks east of the Capitol along Court and Chemeketa streets – and Mill Creek – offers beautiful colors in a residential setting of historic houses. The colors already are glowing and appear to peak a bit earlier than other places in town.

Pringle Creek Community

This lesser-known neighborhood offers a 1-mile walking path with bright colors. Find more information on the community at its Facebook page.

Other ideas

- State Capitol State Park.
- Orchard Heights Park.
- Eola Hills Park.

Mid-Willamette Valley

The parks, refuges and greenways just outside Salem are a mixed bag for autumn color, but here are five places that stand out.

Champoeg State Heritage Area

The place where Oregon democracy was born typically blazes with red and gold leaves. The park, open year-round, can be experienced in multiple ways.

A favorite adventure is an 8-mile bike ride through the park to Butteville Store, one of the oldest in the state.

Willamette Mission State Park

Another famous historical destination, Willamette Mission State Park offers red maples, oaks and walnut trees.

Ankeny and Finley wildlife refuges

The three wildlife refuges of the Willamette Valley all typically have nice fall color, but two places that probably have the best fireworks include Ankeny and Finley refuges.

Woodpecker Loop, a 1-mile hike, is a popular option at Finley NWR.

Closer to Salem, the Rail Trail, a short hike, and Ankeny Hill Overlook, at Ankeny Hill NWR just south of Salem, usually offer great fall colors. The ash trees on the Red Trail often turn a striking yellow.

Luckiamute Landing State Natural Area

This little-traveled natural area south of Monmouth offers easy hiking and some nice fall colors.

Three miles of hiking is possible from a trailhead that offers access along a meadow and through a riparian hardwood forest of Oregon ash and bigleaf maple. The trail ends at a nice view of the Willamette River.



Parish Lake lights up with fall colors in October. ZACH URNESS/STATESMAN JOURNAL

Cascade Foothills and Mountains

Beware of snow and closures from areas damaged by wildfires, but chilly days typically lead to wonderful colors in the mountains around Detroit in autumn.

Silver Falls State Park

Bright yellows ornament this iconic park’s collection of giant waterfalls.

McDowell Creek Falls

A small-scale version of Silver Falls, this charming park north of Sweet Home offers more fall color amid cascades.

Hike 2 to 3 miles among falling water and mostly gold colors that often peak in late October or early November.

Parish and Daily lakes

This quiet little lake east of Detroit lights up during October and provides hiking and fishing opportunities to boot.

The scenery of the drive is well known. North Santiam Highway 22 gains more fall colors as you pass Detroit and head toward the pass. Parish Lake Road 2266 is on the right past Marion Forks – follow it to a trailhead. The Parish Lake Trail is just half a mile and mostly green until you reach the lake, where there’s often an explosion of colors around the shoreline.

Nearby Daily Lake is also worth checking out.

North Santiam River

If you love rafting, the North Santiam River during autumn is spectacular.

The river offers more enjoyable whitewater as dam releases increase and the river corridor lights up with fall color.

For challenging Class III/IV whitewater, float from Packsaddle Park to Mill City or Fishermen’s Bend. For less-intimidating water, float from Fishermen’s Bend to Mehema boat ramp.

Other great places to see fall color

Portland
Forest Park
Hoyt Arboretum
Eugene
Mount Pisgah
Marie Jacobs Park
Cascade Foothills east of Eugene
Highway 126
South side of Clear Lake
Trailhead at Old Wagon Road Trail
East of Sahalie Falls
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Report Cards

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ment was at 41,770 the prior year.

During the pandemic, the Salem-Keizer school district gained 15 new teachers. Of its 2,042 teachers in 2020-2021, 80% were classified as “experienced teachers,” up from last year’s 78%. ODE defines experienced teachers as licensed teachers with more than three years of experience.

The district also added three counselors/psychologists for a total of 122 in the district but lost educational assistants, decreasing from 1,114 to 1,092.

Progress toward graduation

Statewide, progress to keep students on track to earn their diploma within four years dropped compared to the 2018-2019 school year, the last year ODE has reliable data.

In 2020-2021, ODE saw a “big decrease,” Wiens said, with the rate of students on track dropping 11% to 74%.

The Salem-Keizer district was above the state average in 2018 at 87% but this year fell below it, reporting that 70% of students earned a quarter of required graduation credits by the end of ninth grade.

In Salem-Keizer:

- Roberts High School, which provides nontraditional programs to students, had fewer than 5% of students on track to graduate within four years.
- North Salem High, 57% on track to graduate.
- Early College High, which focuses on offering college credits as part of its program, 95% on track.
- McKay High School, 62% on track.
- McNary High School, 77% on track.
- South Salem High School, 74% on track.
- Sprague High School, 74% on track.
- West Salem High School, 81% on track.

In the Woodburn School District, students were further below the state average this year compared to the Salem-Keizer district, with 65% of 5,391 students on track to graduate in time.

- At the Wellness Business and Sports School, 79% of students were on track.
- Woodburn Academy of Art Science and Technology, 65% on track.
- Woodburn Arts and Communications Academy, 54% on track.

In the Silver Falls School District, Silverton High students hit the state 74% average.

Polk County’s Central School District reported that 46% of their students at their only high school, Central High School, had completed a quarter of their credits before their freshman year.

Varied results for students of color

In Salem-Keizer, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and students struggling with homelessness — included in the report for the first time — were the student groups with the lowest percentage of students on track to graduate, both 39%, followed by migrant students (51%), Hispanic/Latino (61%) and American Indian/Alaska Native students (65%).

Compared to the previous report, percentages dropped for migrant students from 68% and American Indian/Alaska Native students from 70%.

Black, Asian and white students in the district were all above the Oregon average at 82%, 87% and 80% respectively.

The percentages are a decrease among white and Asian students but an increase of 12% among Black students.

Wiens warned, however, of comparing data to previous years.

“A lot of our data was either severely impacted or it’s a different definition this year so comparison to prior years is not warranted,” he said. “We expect these comparisons to slowly return in the future as our data stabilizes.”

Attendance not included

Distance learning also continued to bring significant changes to the definition of attendance in Oregon schools.

“Remote learning, especially for online schools, used to have attendance on twice-weekly check-ins with a student. Last year, with the move to comprehensive distance learning, we required daily attendance for students in

remote learning,” Wiens said.

ODE mirrored the daily attendance required from in-person learning, moving to daily attendance for remote learning. Additionally, the “very definition of what attendance meant” was different last year, becoming much broader to allow for teacher check-ins or other forms of engagement by the student to be marked present.

Under ODE guidelines, attendance included participation in class activities and interaction with a teacher during a school day either by participating in a video class, communicating with the teacher through text, email or on a phone call, or turning in completed coursework.

Because of the changes, attendance data was not included in this year’s report. Instead, “regular attenders” data will be reported separately from the district profiles and available on a separate website.

Of the 37,585 students included in the separate report about attendance, 38.4% were chronically absent in the Salem-Keizer school district. A higher percentage of students of color were chronically absent, according to the data: 40.6% of Black students, 46% of Hispanic/Latino students, 49.6% American Indian/Alaska Native students and 62.1% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Students experiencing homelessness in the district were also included in this data for the first time. According to the report, 72.2% of the district’s homeless (361 students) were chronically absent during the school year.

Parents wanting information about attendance and class sizes will be able to view that data on a separate webpage linked on the ODE reports.

“We are not putting it on our At A Glance profiles because it doesn’t mean what people normally think of class size being. Class size for most of our stakeholders would reflect the notion of how many students are physically in the classroom. But with a lot of the state under remote learning and or hybrid learning, that notion is just not the same this year,” Wiens said.

Low state assessment

Information about standardized testing was missing from last year’s report, prompted by COVID-19 closures.

Those testing results will be missing from the annual report cards once again after low participation rates in statewide assessments.

Usually, results from standardized testing are used as a way to track how well students are learning.

“The results of those assessments should not be compared across years, across schools or across students. And because of all of the cautions we have around that data, we’re reporting that separately and not on the At a Glance profiles,” Wiens said.

Links to the website containing available information about state assessment will also be available on the At A Glance reports.

In Oregon, the state received a waiver to reduce the required grades for testing in 2020-21. With ongoing limited in-person instruction and concerns about impacts on families, ODE did not support remote administration of statewide assessments. Those assessments were required to be administered at a school testing site.

“Many districts prioritized instruction over test administration,” Wiens said.

This, in addition to parent opt-outs, led to very low participation typically in the 30% range for required assessments and even lower for the optional ones. In previous years, participation is usually 94-95%, according to ODE.

In the Salem-Keizer district, few students tested in most grades or student groups shown. Data was only available for some students in Grade 3 who participated in English Language Arts assessments and one student group for the same subject in Grade 6.

Only 0.6 percent of students in the district from Grade 3 participated, according to the data.

“We emphasize that when participation rates are low, especially if they’re below 80%, we really should not use that data to compare across years, across schools or even across student groups within a school,” Wiens said. “Assessment data is valid and reliable when we have high participation rates.”

For more information about this year’s report, visit the ODE website.

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Students enter the building for the first day of hybrid learning at McNary High School in April. BRIAN HAYES/STATESMAN JOURNAL