

# SCHOOLS

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ment Monday said the state's new metrics for keeping schools open allows districts to make local decisions based on community spread of the virus and its effects on school operations. If the local public health authority, community and school leadership teams indicate the district should move to Comprehensive Distance Learning, the district will notify staff, students, families and community on Thursday.

Grades K-3, then, would change from onsite learning to virtual learning.

La Grande School District is holding a virtual town hall Tuesday to address how the new Oregon health metrics impact the district and on-site and virtual instruction.

Colt Gill, director of the Oregon Department of Education, informed superintendents across the state in a letter Saturday that schools in counties under the pause order "must limit the capacity to a maximum of 50 people indoors, including staff, or the number of people based on a determination of capacity (square footage/occupancy), whichever is less," Gill stated in the letter.

Union, Imbler and La Grande school districts have reported cases among staff over the past two weeks, coinciding with the rise in

cases locally and statewide.

Imbler plans to remain in-person for as long as possible, according to Superintendent Angie Lakey-Campbell. Union School District Superintendent Carter Wells said the district plans to follow guidance from the Oregon Department of Education and Oregon Health Authority.

"If we can stay open, we plan to stay open," Wells said. "As long as there are not multiple cases in multiple cohorts."

Cove Superintendent Earl Pettit said his district does not plan to go back to distance learning at this time.

"Things can change depending on what happens within the school community," Pettit said. "We are still operating here with no confirmed cases."

Elgin School District also is planning to continue in-person instruction, Superintendent Dianne Greif said. District administrators will watch the case count, but the district hopes to keep students in class.

North Powder School District has not reported any cases since kindergarten through 12th grade returned for in-person instruction in September.

"We are watching the numbers," Superintendent Lance Dixon said, "but unless we have an outbreak in the school we will continue in-person instruction."

— Observer reporter Kaleb Lay contributed to this report.

# Oregon elections director fired after he details problems

SALEM — Oregon's elections director was abruptly fired in a text message by the secretary of state after he pointed out serious issues with the state's aging and vulnerable technology for running elections.

Elections Director Stephen Trout learned in a text message Thursday night, Nov. 5, that he was out.

On Friday, Secretary of State Bev Clarno, a Republican appointed to the position by Democratic Gov. Kate Brown, announced the change to county clerks and other elections officials in Oregon's 36 counties. Election officials in the state were stunned.

Steve Druckenmiller, the veteran Linn County clerk, said Clarno's action was "dangerous and so ignorant."

"We are still in the election process right now. We are reconciling,

we're dealing with problems right now as far as your signatures and communicating with voters who didn't sign the ballots," Druckenmiller said. "We're going to have to do recounts, all of these things. She doesn't understand elections."

Clarno's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Trout, in a letter emailed on Nov. 2 to the Republican and Democratic candidates to replace Clarno, who did not run, described problems with the internet technology side of the secretary of state's office.

He also said federal money had been misspent and that \$11.7 million from the federal government must be returned by Dec. 31 because the Legislature did not authorize to "spend a penny" of the funds.

— Associated Press

## LA GRANDE SCHOOL DISTRICT ONLINE TOWN HALL ON HEALTH METRICS

LA GRANDE — The La Grande School District will address how Oregon's health metrics and the recent increase in COVID-19 cases affect the district during a virtual meeting Tuesday, Nov. 10, beginning at 6:30 p.m. You can attend the town hall live at the district's online TV website [www.lgsd.tv](http://www.lgsd.tv) or via the school district's Facebook page.

The event will be available for viewing after Tuesday on Facebook. There will not be a live Q&A session during the town hall. But you can submit questions to reopening@lagrandedesd.org. District officials will look for trends in questions and address those questions during the town hall.

GRANDE RONDE HOSPITAL AND CLINICS

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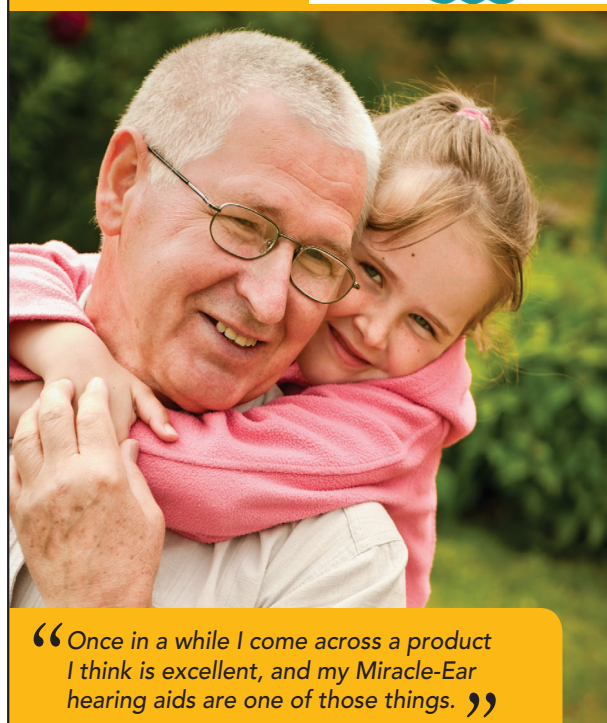
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