

# DISTRICT,

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the data each month because “the district is under a lot of stress, a lot of work, a lot of pressure.”

“We made the decision to not have the data shared monthly because we are focused on the District’s Key Performance Indicators to measure success and though discipline data is very important, we want to focus on other disparities such as the lack of college preparation opportunities among students of color,” Avila told the *Keizertimes* on Wednesday, Dec. 1. “The discipline data informs us that students continue to struggle integrating back among each other with stresses that disrupt their learning. We’ll continue to review the discipline data in meetings where we can do deeper dives to understand with greater context.”

At the Nov. 16 Salem-Keizer school

board work session, district officials presented discipline data that included total suspensions, expulsions, and fighting violations in the district from Sept. 1 to Nov. 5. Compared to the same timeframe in 2019, expulsions, insubordinate violations

A pattern that I’ve seen in my time as a building leader is that, especially around the holidays, we’ll see a spike or increase in problem behaviors in school.

— **ITON UDOSENATA**  
SKPS Assistant Superintendent

and suspensions had all drastically decreased. There were only 1,006 suspensions in the first two months of school — down 55% from 2019 — for an average of 25 suspensions in the district per day.

In the 10 school days immediately following that release, however, there were 313 in-school suspensions and 190 out-of-school suspensions, totaling 503 suspensions. The per day average of fights, physical assaults and expulsions increased only slightly.

Udosenata and other district officials said on the phone call Tuesday that a few major incidents at schools last week most

likely contributed to the spike. Gweneth Bruey-Finck, the director of secondary curriculum and instruction, added that another cause was “we also got to a period in time where a lot of that progressive series of disciplines reached the suspension level.”

“It’s really concerning when students are excluded from the educational environment, that’s never the outcome that we want,” said Bruey-Finck. “However, I think it’s also important to know that behind that one data point is a huge amount of hours of support and counsel and mentorship and conversations and redirection and tier one interventions.”

Udosenata said the district will continue to update parents on incidents or behavioral patterns in schools, which “mitigates the need to have frequent updates like this on a monthly basis in public board meetings.”

“It’s of paramount importance to us that we’re keeping our kids in class and not suspending kids. But we do also have a system of accountability that includes suspensions,” said Udosenata.

# Keizer tree lights up on Tuesday, Dec. 7

Two lucky children will be chosen to assist Santa Claus as he flips the switch that lights up Keizer’s Christmas tree on Tuesday, Dec. 7.

This is a free community event put on by the Keizer Chamber of Commerce in partnership with Keizer Fire District and City of Keizer.

The annual lighting ceremony is at Walery Plaza, named for Keizer resident Dave Walery, affectionately known as Mr. Christmas due to his volunteer work over many years maintaining and installing the decorations that line River Road during the holidays as well as his work with the permanent tree.

Walery Plaza is located where River Road and Cherry Avenue meet. If you’re driving along River Road and can’t find it, just look for the tall tree with the nearby large crowd.

Children 12 years and younger are selected for the honor by a drawing and sign-ups will start at 6 p.m. There is a sign-up table at the event; children simply need to put their name and age on the form.

Two names will be drawn and they will be asked to join Santa in flipping the switch that lights the Holiday Tree.

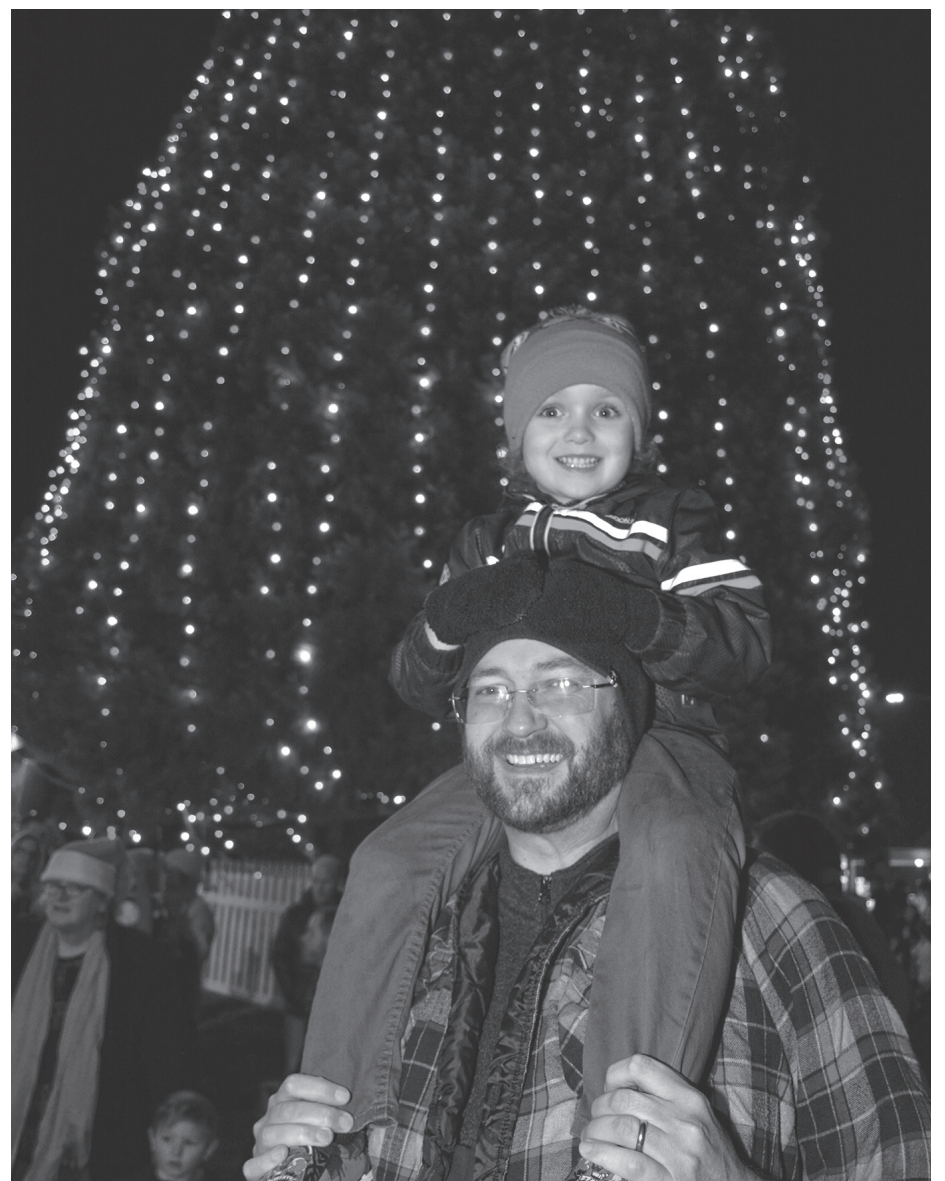
Santa is expected to arrive in Keizer around 6:15 p.m., hitching a ride to Walery Plaza in a fire truck courtesy of his friends at the Keizer Fire District. The actual flipping of the switch of the tree lights is expected to happen shortly after that.

The Whiteaker Middle School choir will provide the carol singing.

Parking will be available at the Keizer Elks Lodge.

## NEWS TIPS?

*If it’s happening in Keizer, or to someone from Keizer — WE WANT TO KNOW.*  
[kt@keizertimes.com](mailto:kt@keizertimes.com)



The Keizer tree lighting ceremony will begin at 6 p.m.

FILE PHOTO, Keizertimes

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