

school.”

Once the district is caught up on work, Perry said she’s hopeful a system can be set up where volunteers can pass criminal background checks, submit vaccine cards and then email schools with times that they can help. All volunteers in Oregon K-12 schools are currently required to be vaccinated.

Teachers aren’t the only ones missing from classrooms either. Since the return from winter break, a large number of students are being reported as absent each day. On Jan. 21, according to the district’s public dashboard, 25% of Salem-Keizer students were reported as absent — a total of 9,830 students.

The Salem-Keizer district’s public tracking of COVID numbers makes it difficult

to pinpoint how many students are missing for COVID-related reasons. Of the top five largest districts in Oregon, which also includes Portland, Beaverton, Hillsboro and Bend-La Pine, Salem-Keizer is the only one that doesn’t publicly track total students and teachers in COVID isolation or quarantine with daily updates.

Instead, the district releases end-of-week data on students and teachers that have contracted COVID on school grounds, which has skyrocketed since the first of the year. From September to December of this school year, 672 total students contracted COVID while “on-site at any or multiple SKPS schools.”

From Jan. 10 to Jan. 21, a total of eight school days, 673 students contracted COVID while at Salem-Keizer schools

— an average of 84 students per day.

Despite this spike in COVID spread within schools, Perry said that the district will continue to allow close contact extracurriculars, such as athletics. Spectator limits, however, will continue. High school athletics are allowed four spectators per participant, middle school athletics are allowed two spectators per participant and music events are limited to 50% capacity.

“Every decision we make right now, I just can’t say this enough, we’re always trying to make it with the north star of how do you keep kids in person for five days a week instruction,” Perry said. “Right now we haven’t closed a school to go into remote learning, I think that’s the best thing for our kids and we are really committed to trying to make the moves necessary to do that.”

Even with the “north star” of remaining in person five days a week, the district has already planned at least two more non-student contact days on Feb. 18 and May 20. She said that despite the district’s best efforts, parents should expect additional disruptions.

“One of my final comments would be, just to parents and families on behalf of our educators, we will see other disruptions in the schedule. I don’t know what that looks like yet, we are continuing to try to figure out what the best strategy is,” Perry said. “The disruption in schedule will either be because our educators, the person that matters most to your kids, needs more time to be fully prepared. Or we are just in such a staffing shortage that we don’t have another solution.”

brainfood

Straight Forward

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CREATORS NEWS SERVICE

By Charles Preston

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Cat of the Week



Names:
(L) CHARLEY
(R) SHELLY



Both Cats
Age: 5 months

HISTORY:

Shelly and Charley are both grey domestic short hairs.

PREFERRED HOME:

These cats are shy and mellow. They would do best in a quiet environment.

WE HAVE MOVED >>> Our new location is 4157 Cherry Avenue, Keizer <<< 503-362-5611



Jim Taylor
Keizer's First Citizen,
2021

Congratulations
Jim

You're first in
MY book!

Your loving wife,
Darlene Taylor

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