



# It's almost time... Egan Gardens opens for a new season on March 4th.

Watch for your pansy coupon in next week's ad.  
See you then!

... it's a situation that the superintendent needs to be cautious of because you have to have money to pay for teachers and staff but to what expense?

— DANIELLE BETHELL  
Salem-Keizer School Board member

those dollars to the school, some would say kids wouldn't have access to certain things. But I disagree. I believe that we live in a very comfortable community that provides access to kids in need."

The Salem-Keizer School District expects to receive \$140 million in federal COVID relief funds through September 2023, distributed by the state education department. That money, approved by

Congress in several packages, was intended to help cover pandemic-related school expenses like air filters or internet hotspots, and to help kids catch up academically.

Bethell, director of Zone 6, said that the district wouldn't be breaking any laws by making masks optional before March 31.

"There's a threat from the state currently that if you don't follow the laws, their funding would be revoked. They're not in violation of any federal state or law, it's just a rule," said Bethell. "It's a threat and it's a situation that the superintendent needs to be cautious of because you have to have money to pay for teachers and staff but to what expense? Whose lives are we really impacting overall in mental health and all the way around?"

Jonathan Modie, spokesperson for the Oregon Health Authority, said the

district would be breaking the law by making masks optional before March 31 and would be subject to a civil penalty of \$500 per day per violation.

"They would be breaking the law, and no, there are no loopholes," Modie said in an email. "Our recommendation is that schools do the right thing for the safety and health of their students, teachers, staff, families and communities and just wait until the mask requirement for schools lifts on March 31."

During a phone interview on Feb. 18, school board chair Osvaldo Avila echoed what Superintendent Christy Perry has said at previous school board meetings.

"Our superintendent has provided and laid out the steps for us to make a decision. We are awaiting additional guidance from the Oregon Health Authority and we will then make an informed decision on what we will do after March 31," Avila said.

## NEWS TIPS?

If it's happening in Keizer, or to someone from Keizer —

WE WANT TO KNOW.

kt@keizertimes.com



The rally drew hundreds of parents and students from across the district.

Photo by MATT RAWLINGS of Keizertimes

## Cat of the Week



Name: **MAJOR SASSY**

Age: **1**

HISTORY: 1-year-old male short hair tabby

PREFERRED HOME: Friendly super sweet, purrs a lot. Gets along well with other cats.

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

## KEIZERTimes

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