

## Board of Directors

Lisa Harnisch, Zone 1, Second Vice-Chairperson; Cynthia Richardson, Zone 2, Chairperson; Ashley Carson Cottingham, Zone 3; Satya Chandragiri, Zone 4; Karina Guzmán Ortiz, Zone 5, First Vice-Chairperson; Krissy Hudson, Zone 6; María Hinojos Pressey, Zone 7

## Executive Leadership

Andrea Castañeda, Superintendent; Olga Cobb, Deputy Superintendent, Elementary; Danielle Neves, Deputy Superintendent, Secondary; Robert Silva, Chief Operations Officer; John Beight, Executive Director, Human Resources; Jonathan McIlroy, Executive Director, Strategy & Analytics; Aaron Harada, Director, Community Relations & Communications



# SUCCESS

## in Salem-Keizer



Published February 2025

District Priorities

Student Outcomes

Nationally-Recognized Programs



# SUPERINTENDENT'S

## A Year of Progress, Challenges, and Commitment

Salem-Keizer Community,

As we reflect on the past year and look ahead, I want to celebrate our successes, acknowledge challenges, and reaffirm our shared commitment to our students, families, staff, and members of our community who all make Salem-Keizer such a wonderful place to live, grow, learn and contribute.

We celebrate the incredible growth in our schools and programs we see daily. In our schools, students hold unlimited potential for learning. They learn to read and become critical thinkers, problem solvers, mathematicians, engineers, musicians, authors, scientists, and world changers. Our students show resilience, excellence, authenticity, and creativity and are supported by dedicated educators, families, volunteers, and community partners. From academic achievements to enrichment programs, our schools provide opportunities for all students to thrive.

At the same time, we recognize the challenges. Our academic progress is too slow for what we know our students need and are capable of. They need stronger skills to succeed in the world, and we must make the most of each of the 13 years we serve them.

Despite being Oregon's largest truly diverse district, we are funded at lower levels than our peers, which does not reflect the true and ever-expanding needs of our students. Despite these challenges, I am confident in the potential of our students and our school communities.



# MESSAGE

Over the next few years, Salem-Keizer will make historic investments in teaching and learning. This means adding high-quality curricula to our schools and investing in the professional learning they need and deserve.

We will continue to invest in every dimension of safety, including expanding and differentiating supports for our students' mental and behavioral health needs. Finally, we will continue to invest in and improve our nationally-recognized layered safety systems.

*Public education is our shared responsibility.* Regardless of differences, we must all believe in providing every child with a great education. When our children succeed, our entire community thrives.

Thank you for your continued partnership and commitment to the future of Salem-Keizer Public Schools.

Sincerely,

**ANDREA CASTAÑEDA**  
Superintendent  
Salem-Keizer Public Schools

*Andrea Castañeda has served as Superintendent of Salem-Keizer Public Schools since 2023. Castañeda understands and is committed to the opportunity and choice-filled life that public education makes possible. She comes from a white and Mexican family that, on both sides, is one generation from barely getting by. Public schools lifted her family upward and forward, and she is committed to providing that same opportunity to the students of Salem-Keizer.*



# SCHOOL BOARD

Salem-Keizer Students, Staff and Community,

This is a pivotal and exciting moment for Salem-Keizer Public Schools. The next chapter in our district's story is significant because it will reflect who we are as a school community, what we value as a system and how deeply we are committed to our students' success. It's a chapter that must tell the story of how every child in Salem-Keizer can thrive. Through a shared vision among us all, we can take focused and actionable steps forward with unwavering commitment to seeing our vision through.

Last year, we welcomed our new superintendent, Andrea Castañeda, which marked the beginning of this new chapter. We charted a fresh path forward. A path that requires clear-eyed reflection and thoughtful decision-making to focus on areas that would make the greatest impact for our students. As a result, our board identified core priorities: improving regular attendance, increasing literacy with a focus on third-grade reading, ensuring ninth-grade students are on track to graduate, increasing graduation rates and fostering a stronger sense of belonging in our schools.

The coming years hold great promise as we build upon strategies to address these core priorities, refine our systems and do everything possible to engage and support our students and staff. Together, we will write a story of growth, success and opportunity for every student in Salem-Keizer.

**CYNTHIA RICHARDSON**  
Board Chairperson



*Cynthia Richardson has served on the Salem-Keizer School Board since 2023, after serving in public education for several decades. Richardson is committed to the success of all students and has a deep connection to our Salem-Keizer community as a lifelong educator and leader, formerly serving in our Salem-Keizer schools.*

The Salem-Keizer School Board is comprised of seven-community volunteers, who dedicate their time to the success of our school communities. Board members are elected by local voters to serve four-year terms without pay. While each member represents a zone in our district, the entire board works together to serve all students in Salem and Keizer.

# DISTRICT PRIORITIES

## Attendance

Regular attendance helps students build essential skills, develop positive habits and grow socially and emotionally. Our goal is for each student to attend 90 percent or more days during the school year to stay on track.

**56%** Students who attended more than 90% of their enrolled school days.

*"We love seeing high attendance rates because that means our students are consistently at school, accessing their education and connecting with their teachers and peers. Regular attendance sets them up for healthy habits and success in their future endeavors. While attendance has been a challenge in recent years, our staff remain committed to our students and their success first."*

**CHERICE COCHRANE**  
Principal, Keizer Elementary School

## Ninth-Grade on Track

Being on track in ninth grade is a strong predictor of on-time graduation. Ninth-grade on track means a student has earned at least 25 percent of the credits needed for a high school diploma at the end of their freshman year.

**80%** Students earning a quarter of graduation credits in ninth grade.

*"We focus on prioritizing low class sizes in ninth grade, support in core subjects for students learning English or receiving specialized services and more. These examples represent the layers of support our students need from day one to be successful."*

**LARRY RAMIREZ**  
Director, High School Education

**79.43%**  
2024 Graduation Rate

**In SKPS, we are committed to remaining focused on our priorities, ultimately leading to greater outcomes and higher graduation rates for our students.**

## Sense of Belonging

A sense of belonging is essential for learning. When students feel connected to their school community, they can focus better on their learning, which often leads to improved achievement and a stronger foundation for success.

**58%** Elementary students who feel a sense of belonging at school.

*"We foster belonging by connecting students with passions, creating inclusive learning environments, providing strong support systems and building relationships among students, staff, families and the community."*

**CHRIS MOORE**  
Director, Mental Health & Social-Emotional Learning

## Third-Grade Reading

The building blocks of growing strong literacy skills for all students starts with a strong focus on foundational learning. Our educators work to reinforce a focus on the science of reading, data and key intervention strategies to help all students achieve strong literacy skills.

**24%** Third-grade students meeting state grade-level expectations.

*"Students must learn to read so they can read to learn. We don't just focus on the mechanics of reading, we wrap around those skills by giving reading meaning and purpose to help students thrive in their literacy development."*

**KIRSTEN MANNING**  
Foundational Skills Specialist,  
Battle Creek Elementary



# OUR PROGRAMS

Salem-Keizer Public Schools offers a nationally recognized free public education experience where all students can thrive academically, creatively and socially. With 65 schools and numerous districtwide programs, dedicated educators welcome students from diverse backgrounds and provide robust opportunities for growth. Our schools offer one of the state's widest selections of career-readiness programs, comprehensive K-12 music and arts access and passionate instruction across all core academic disciplines. These interconnected programs are thoughtfully designed to prepare students to graduate, prepared for a successful life.

## Dual-Language Programs

Salem-Keizer Public Schools is committed to fostering a learning environment where students thrive both academically and culturally. In Salem-Keizer, 30 percent of students speak a language other than English at home, and many more come from bilingual and bicultural backgrounds.

This rich cultural diversity of our schools is a powerful tool for success. Our students graduate prepared for a successful future in a diverse and ever-changing world.

The students we serve have driven the district's focus on dual-language programming in grades K-12. More than 30 schools host dual-language programs for students across all instructional areas.

Salem-Keizer's dual-language programs prioritize bilingual, bicultural and biliterate learning in both English and Spanish through two-way immersion instruction. Students come into programs speaking mainly English or Spanish and learn alongside each other through this model, slowly increasing their participation in their non-native language as they progress each year. Students in our programs build essential skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking while meeting or exceeding academic benchmarks across all subject areas.

*"Salem-Keizer's dual-language programs not only prepare students for academic excellence but also nurtures conscientious, culturally aware leaders who are ready to thrive in their next chapter after graduation."*

**ROBIN FARUP-ROMERO**  
Multilingual Programs Coordinator



**Dual Language, Supporting the Next Chapter**  
Dual-language programs aim to foster higher engagement for students in academics and leadership activities, increase college enrollment rates and develop a pathway for bilingual, bicultural educators who will continue to enrich our district and the Salem-Keizer community.

As the district continues to expand dual-language opportunities, we remain focused on providing comprehensive K-12 pathways for our emerging bilingual students. By gradually adding Spanish-language courses at middle and high school levels and creating support for heritage learners, our programs ensure that every student has access to life-changing educational opportunities.

The district's educator recruitment pathways bring passionate educators who are deeply connected to the community, further strengthening the cultural and academic bonds in the classroom. Salem-Keizer is proud to now have students who have experienced our dual-language and newcomer programs first-hand, felt their impact and have now returned as educators, teaching the next generation of bilingual professionals.



*"Our school district may not change the world but it's going to change the people that are going to go out and change the world in the future and so that's going to be huge. It starts in our community, it starts in our classrooms, in our school and I think Salem-Keizer's right on board."*

**AVI HERNANDEZ CRUZ**  
McKay High School Educator  
Former Highland Elementary, Parrish Middle and McKay High School Student

## CTE Programs

Salem-Keizer Public Schools is committed to preparing students for success beyond the classroom through high-quality Career and Technical Education programs. Salem-Keizer is proud to offer 50 state-approved CTE programs and four startup programs. Sixteen of these programs offer industry certification, opening the door for students to transfer into a community college, apprenticeship program or directly into a career.



**CTE Programs Designed for Opportunities**  
Students in Salem-Keizer's CTE programs develop expertise and confidence in high-demand fields, from health sciences to advanced manufacturing. Program concentrators achieve a graduation rate consistently greater than 95%, demonstrating the impact of career-focused education.

**Learning Beyond the Classroom**  
Through CTE, students merge rigorous academics with hands-on training, gaining a competitive advantage in today's evolving job market. Students work individually and in teams, solve real-world challenges and connect with mentors, industry leaders and peers who share their interests. Whether earning college credit



# OUR PROGRAMS

in high school, securing apprenticeships or building professional networks, CTE students graduate with a strong competitive advantage for lifelong success.

## Teaching Tomorrow's Industry Leaders

CTE is more than education—it's a launchpad for the future. By partnering with local businesses, trade organizations and higher education institutions, Salem-Keizer ensures students have access to meaningful career opportunities.

Career and Technical Education programs in Salem-Keizer are deeply rooted in the needs of our community. From partnerships with Avelo Airlines at the Salem Airport for our aviation students, to Maps Credit Union with our business students, every opportunity our students partake in is designed to prepare our students for high-demand careers, while also supporting our local community.

*"Career and Technical Education provides industry connections for our students. It's a reason for them to stay in school, it's a connection to our schools and it's giving them that competitive advantage in professional skills to do well in whatever career they choose."*

**AMANDA COREY**  
CTE Program Associate

## CTE Class of 2024

**2,503** CTE Program Graduates

**89.1%** Graduation Rate - Students participating in at least one CTE course during their time in high school

**>95%** Graduation Rate - Students completing a CTE Program

## Music Programs

For decades, Salem-Keizer Public Schools has been a destination district for music education. With dedicated programming for music in all grades K-12, SKPS schools provide students with the necessary support to find a passion, grow in their skills and access unlimited opportunities for growth through music education.

For many students, music programs are what has provided them the "release" during their academic day. In Salem-Keizer the variety of music programming is designed to allow all students to access music education regardless of income, skill level, age or future aspirations.



*"This class has been amazing because it's given me an opportunity to fall back in love, and reconnect with music in a different way. It has made me realize how much I love music and that I need it in my life."*

**MODERN BAND STUDENT**  
McNary High School



McNary's Modern Band class is an example of our approach to music education. This course captures the full spectrum of music by offering a unique career-focused approach to music instruction. In this class students gain music instruction, while also learning about the production process, and develop business skills by coordinating, hosting and supporting music performances. And most of all, this program highlights the power of music in engaging students in a passion to learn.

*"We work to find a connection point for students and that really helps them to find a place of community which brings motivation to carry that on to the other studies. At the end of the day, students are going to have this awesome skill they get to take with them for their life, regardless of if they pursue it as a career, and it fuels them in so many ways."*

**ANDY THOMAS**  
McNary High School Music Educator

## Traditional Ensemble Music Programs

Students in Salem-Keizer access many opportunities for ensemble music education and programs. Over the past two decades students have earned more than 100 first- and second-place finishes at state and national competitions in traditional programs like choir, band and orchestra.

## Music Education for All

Students who have interests outside of "traditional" music programs have many opportunities to develop their musical skills and interests. Salem-Keizer schools work to develop unique opportunities such as Mariachi at Houck Middle School. These courses work to capture the hearts and minds of this generations' next performers, music engineers and technicians, all while supporting students in their studies both on and off the stage.





# BY THE NUMBERS

## Student Demographics

- 1% American Indian
- 2% Asian
- 2% Black/African American
- 47% Hispanic/Latino
- 6% Multiracial
- 3% Pacific Islander
- 39% White

**37,851 Students**

**\$101,000,000+**

Scholarships earned by the graduating Class of 2024

**358**

Students in the Class of 2024 earned the Oregon State Seal of Biliteracy

**2,621**

Students enrolled in music programs

**3,696**

Students participating in athletics programs

**3,408**

Students in a dual-language program

**12,707**

Students enrolled in a CTE program

**2,388**

Students identified for the Talented & Gifted program

**3,553**

Students participating in AVID

**79.43%**

Four-year cohort graduation rate for the Class of 2024

**80.8%**

Five-year cohort graduation rate for the Class of 2024

**34%**

Students who are Ever English Learners

**130**

Languages spoken by SKPS students and families

**3.99%**

Students who dropped out during the 2023-24 school year

*“Our most impactful and inspiring pathway program has been the special education cohort. For over a decade, this program has nurtured and launched more than 200 dedicated special education teachers in SKPS. I feel grateful for this program, as it has been essential in filling our special education teacher positions year after year.”* **BRIAN TURNER**, HR Director of Recruitment and Staffing

## 65 Schools

- 42 Elementary Schools
- 11 Middle Schools
- 8 High Schools
- 4 Charter Schools

\* Staff data as of October 2024

**162**

Counselors, Social Workers and Psychologists

## Staff Demographics

- 1% American Indian
- 2% Asian
- 2% Black/African American
- 23% Hispanic/Latino
- <1% Multiracial
- 1% Pacific Islander
- 70% White

**2,730**

Classified Staff

**2,308**

Licensed Staff

**118**

Principals and Assistant Principals

**56**

Districtwide Supervisors

# OUR OUTCOMES

**2,807**

Graduates with regular or modified diplomas

**132**

Students completed school with an extended diploma or GED

**162**

Students are continuing enrollment



## Early College

**100% (50 graduates)**  
Students earned more than 2,700 college credits



## McKay

**77.6% (482 graduates)**  
CTE concentrators have graduation rates above 98 percent



## McNary

**88.3% (444 graduates)**  
The five-year cohort graduation rate is 93.5 percent, nearly 10 percentage points above the state average



## North Salem

**81.8% (468 graduates)**  
The four-year cohort rate increased by 4.6 percentage points over the previous year



## Roberts

**13.9% (51 graduates)**  
**42.9% completion rate (107 completers)**  
The graduation rate for English Learners improved by more than 2.5 percentage points



## South Salem

**90.4% (500 graduates)**  
The four-year cohort graduation rate increased by 5.7 percentage points



## Sprague

**94.3% (427 graduates)**  
Seventh consecutive year of being above a 90 percent graduation rate



## West Salem

**93% (385 graduates)**  
Students identifying as Hispanic or Latino/a/x graduated at a rate of 92.3 percent