

How to address a problem at school

By Jim Cornelius
Editor in Chief

Sisters has a tight-knit school community and a good reputation across the state for its programs and staff. Yet in any endeavor, conflicts inevitably arise. The Sisters School District has a protocol laid out for handling grievances and concerns that arise in the classroom or outside of it — and school board chair Jay Wilkins believes in the process.

“We are in our best position to do our duty as public officials when the process is followed all the way,” he told *The Nugget* last week.

That process is laid out on the SSD website at <http://ssd6.org/discrimination>; <http://ssd6.org/files/2013/03/KL-Public-Complaints-.pdf>; <http://ssd6.org/files/2019/02/KL-R-G1.pdf>.

“The basic idea of the process is that problems should be addressed as close to the origin of the problem as possible,” Wilkins said.

If there’s an issue between a teacher and student, the process should start with an attempt to resolve it with a meeting of the family and the teacher. The next step would be to take the matter to the school principal, and if that doesn’t resolve the matter, on to the schools superintendent. Only after such attempts to resolve an issue are unsuccessful would it be appropriate to appeal the matter to the school board.

In the case of an appeal to the board, that is conducted in a private meeting.

“We’re really looking at everything the family wants to present, and everything that the relevant people in the district want to present and determine if policies were followed appropriately or not,” Wilkins explained.

The board will generally

formulate findings and recommendations and refer the matter back to the schools superintendent for action.

“In practice, Wilkins said, “we kind of collectively get to that decision.”

Each step in the process has timelines for response attached, which can vary.

In cases where a hearing before the board does not resolve an issue, patrons of the district have the option to make a representation to the Oregon Department of Education.

In a small town, in which school board members are readily accessible to the public, awkward situations can develop where a board member might be buttonholed at a party or in the grocery check-out line, where a member of the public might informally air a grievance.

Wilkins notes that board members can’t really say or do anything about a matter presented in such a manner.

“You want to be empathetic,” he said. “Whoever has that concern, that’s a real concern for them. But at the same time, you don’t want to get so involved that you become biased or lose objectivity. They’re hurting — but you make it worse if you don’t follow the process.”

The board chair also noted that the board has to act collectively, not as disparate individuals, when addressing concerns.

Wilkins said that transparency of decision-making is as important to the members of the board as it is to the public they serve. School boards are subject to Oregon’s robust public meetings laws.

“The desire for transparency is an important one for us,” Wilkins said. “We don’t want to be meeting and making decisions out of the

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Outlaws headed to state playoffs

By Rongi Yost
Correspondent

The Lady Outlaws hosted Cottage Grove in a play-in game at Sisters High School on Saturday, November 2. They bested the Lions in a three-set sweep with scores of 25-16, 25-22, and 25-20.

Sisters will advance to the state tournament, which will be held at Forest Grove High School on Friday and Saturday, November 8-9, where the final eight teams will compete for a championship trophy. The Outlaws first game will be against league foe Philomath at 10 a.m. on Friday.

In the first set against the Lions on Saturday, teams kept the score close. With the score tied 11-11 Sam Silva headed back to the service line and served up an ace to give the Outlaws a 12-11 lead. The next play, Greta Davis had a big stuff block and Sisters went up by two. Sam served the Outlaws to a lead of 17-11. Sisters held onto the momentum and the Lions couldn’t close the gap.

Sisters went down 0-5 at the start of the second set, and at 3-8 Coach Rory Rush called timeout. The Outlaws regained their focus, earned the sideout and Sydney Myhre went back to serve. Sydney served the next six points to give the Outlaws a one-point advantage. Teams again battled back and forth until Addy Myhre went back to serve with the score even



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Greta Davis has been a force at the net for the Outlaws.

at 15-15. Addy served the Outlaws to a four-point lead, 19-15. The Lions made a run and closed the gap to 23-22, but Sam Silva served out the game and the Outlaws posted a second-set win.

The Outlaws battled from behind in the third set, and down by four at 9-13, Rush again called a timeout. Sisters worked hard, and an ace from Sophie Silva finally tied it up 18-18. Sam Silva had a tip kill the next play to give the Outlaws the go-ahead point at 19-18. Sisters buckled down, focused and closed out the match with a kill from

Natalie Sitz.

Davis led the team with 12 kills and six blocks. Sophie Silva recorded 11 kills and four blocks, and Sam Silva added nine kills and four aces.

Rush said, “Tonight showed growth from everyone. Early in the season we would have been rattled being down 0-5, but tonight we were able to stay calm and focus on what we needed to do. We focused on good serving and finding holes in their offense. I’m very proud of the girls and looking forward to being back in Forest Grove.”



Photo: Anthony Pidgeon

Let's Sing, Sisters!

Friday, November 22nd
7:30 pm
The Belfry

FREE EVENT

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Complimentary snacks and water provided by C4C



For more information: Citizens4Community.com

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