

SPORTS: Families' level of comfort to be respected

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the Governor's Office, OHA and ODE. This participation may include conditioning, practices, and interscholastic competitions in those permitted activities provided schools adhere to OSAA policies. Health protocols and other guidance are clearly outlined by the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and Oregon Department of Education (ODE), which are subject to county phase requirements.

Sisters has decided, starting September 15, to offer three four-week "mini-seasons" beginning with traditional spring sports (baseball, softball, tennis, golf, track and field, and lacrosse). In October, fall sports will run for another four weeks, followed by winter sports.

Sports considered "full contact" — such as football and lacrosse — will be offered as conditioning only unless the health metrics change during Season One.

Other districts are making different plans, but Thorson and other district leaders believe this plan works best for Sisters.

Thorson explained, "Our district has recognized the need for our students to get safely engaged again, and has set a plan which is a healthy compromise on the engagement spectrum. With us still in the distance-learning mode, it did not make sense for us to have opened things up for athletics on August 31 and dive right into competition with other schools. Our priority is getting the kids back in their seats for class and that means limiting contact and exposure as much as we can."

The plan adds up to teams being together for about 20 practices during the mini-season and the possible potential for some limited competition.

"In terms of competition, we have scheduled some events for some of the spring sports teams but we are in a 'wait and see mode' for those and will only conduct these if the health metrics are continuing in a positive direction," said Thorson.

The district is working out ways to safely have middle-school activities available as well, according to Thorson.

"We also want to start to get our middle-school student-athletes involved and have opened up middle-school-track 'practice only' sessions for them," he said.

Thorson understands well the complexity and balancing

act of keeping students and staff from spreading COVID-19, while also giving students the opportunity for activities that promote physical, as well as emotional, health.

"These opportunities for our students to engage in athletics and other activities for the district are of course optional," he explained. "Our coaching staff will be following all of the required protocols to safely run our practice sessions and have communicated to the parents that these are not mandatory practices."

Being outdoors, keeping distance from one another, conducting health checks and working in small cohorts are all part of the plan for safety.

"We realize the comfort levels and health issues vary from family to family and we respect and support everyone's position, but want to make athletics and other activities safely available to our students," Thorson said. "Our youth need the physical and social benefits of activities now more than ever, and some positivity for them right now will go a long way."

Families can register for Season One activities through Family I.D. at no cost, according to Thorson.

"We see this offering as a good way to get kids active again and to try something new," said Thorson.

SCHOOLS: District proclaimed diversity and anti-racism

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a net gain over last year of 30. The elementary school has had a continuous flow of kindergarten enrollments, along with other grades, and stood at a total of 322, which includes some families who have opted for the district's full-time online option and full-time distance learning. The high school reported a total of 25 new students to the district. More accurate enrollment numbers will be available soon.

The preschool has not yet begun operations as the district awaits the signing of a contract from the Oregon Early Learning Division which oversees public preschools in Oregon. Principal Joan Warburg said, "We have staff hired and are ready to rock and roll, but have to wait for the state to finish the contract."

Special education director Martha Hindman reported on summer activities, including the Youth Transition Program and the extended school year academic skills class. Teaching and paraprofessionals took part in a "Special Education 101" course in August to enhance understanding of special education law and best practices.

The board approved a minor adjustment to the school calendar, necessitated in part due to the high school and middle school operating on six-week segments rather than traditional terms. The updated calendar will be available on the school district website soon.

The new transportation facility west of SPRD is completed.

Curt Scholl expressed the district's commitment to supporting the social/emotional needs of students during the challenges of the pandemic and distance learning.

The next school board meeting is set for Wednesday, October 7 at 6 p.m.

RAFFLE: Funds will help community-building efforts

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heightened need for community members to access a bounty of essential goods in a manner that would be accessible and safe.

It took a great effort to continue the market this year in the face of COVID-19. These challenges required doubling the number of hours to organize and manage the market, and required more resources to ensure safety and social distancing inside of the market. Additional physical

procedures and digital infrastructure were developed — exceeding national safety standards and leading as an innovator in the region — incorporating an online pre-order option with curbside pickup for contactless access to healthy foods and locally-sourced products. Despite the ongoing challenges of this time, market attendance has continued to increase, providing vendors with an essential marketplace and further stimulating the local economy.

With the mission to support a healthier community in mind, Sisters Farmers Market sees an urgent need for those impacted directly by the catastrophic wildfires, and hopes

to provide an avenue for Central Oregonians to support our devastated communities to the west. Fifty percent of ticket sales from raffle entries will be distributed to wildfire relief efforts through the end of September.

The Sisters Farmers Market continues to draw high-quality vendors and enthusiastic customers from in and out of town. The funds raised through the raffle will allow the Sisters Farmers Market to recover some of this year's extra costs brought on by COVID, keeping fees low for vendors and leaving the market in a stronger position to continue in the 2021 season.

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