

Sisters School Board spotlight

By **Charlie Kanzig**
Correspondent

The Sisters School Board held its monthly meeting on Wednesday, April 7, at Sisters Middle School. Board members Edie Jones, Jeff Smith, Don Hedrick, and Jay Wilkins were in attendance. Dr. David Thorsett was absent.

- Revenue showed a slight downturn due to adjustments the state made on enrollment, due to questions about total number of students in attendance. It is expected to be adjusted due to information on actual attendance being impacted by COVID-19. Scholl reported that overall enrollment stands at 1,159 students, which is up four students from last month.

- Superintendent Curt Scholl spoke on behalf of the high school as Joe Hosang recuperates from some health issues, and updated the Board on the move made April 12 to all students being in attendance four days a week from the “hybrid” of two days in person and two days comprehensive distance learning. Fridays will remain planning and development days for teachers and staff.

- Scholl explained that the school metrics for the county are based on 200 cases per 100,000 population which is what has allowed Sisters to lower the social distancing of desks and students to three feet from six, meaning that more students can be in classrooms at a time now. If the numbers bump up again, the district would have to reinstitute the six-foot spacing rules.

- Sisters Elementary School (SES) Principal Joan Warburg reported that five more students will be returning to the elementary school from full-time Comprehensive Distance Learning and homeschooling. Kindergarten Roundup started earlier this year to help ensure that SES knows as accurately as possible how many students will be coming in order to make proper staffing and space adjustments.

- The current count for next year is 80, which is a record number. Some of that stems from parents holding out kindergarteners this year due to COVID. All current and future kindergarten parents have a chance to come in person to the school to see the facilities and make connections in order to build community.

- The preschool enrollment is 11 students and Warburg plans to work closely with the other preschool providers in the weeks ahead to help ensure that students get the opportunity to be in preschool in Sisters next year as part of the continuing Oregon Preschool Promise grant. New hires at the elementary school include music, STEAM, and third grade. Finally, Warburg reported that the school is hoping to keep as many spring traditions as possible as the year comes to a close.

- Alison Haney, whose resignation as Sisters Middle School (SMS) principal was accepted later in the meeting, started her report saying she feels humble, thankful, and fortunate for the three years she got to spend in the district. Her first child, which will be her main focus in the years ahead, is due in late May, meaning her school year will be ending about three weeks early. She expressed a desire to be involved in the district in the future. Staff members are planning some day-trip outdoor school experiences for grades six and seven this spring.

Haney concluded saying that the “iReady” assessments will be used to measure student success since state assessments, which are

still mandated in a limited fashion this year, will not be able to supply meaningful, comprehensive information.

- The district has hired a new director of student services, Lorna Van Geem.

- Sisters Middle School will begin screening applications for its new principal and arranging interviews over the next two weeks.

- Scholl reported that the vote for the school bond to build a new elementary school is coming up on May 18 and the citizen committee is working toward getting information out over the next weeks. *The Bulletin’s* editorial board has endorsed the approval of the bond.

- The school calendar for 2021-22 was adopted unanimously and features a start date of September 7, a five-days-a-week schedule, a one-week spring break (3/28-4/1), and an ending date of June 15 for SES and SMS and June 16 (half-day finals) for Sisters High School. Future discussion is planned about whether to go back to a late start on Wednesdays as has been done for many years for teacher development, or to move to an early release one day a week.

- Budget committee members were approved and appointed and will be led by former superintendent Steve Swisher.

The next School Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 5 at 6 p.m. at Sisters Middle School.

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Battling hunger with fresh vegetables

According to Susannah Morgan, director of the Oregon Food Banks, “our state is in the 100-year flood of hunger.” Confirmed data from Neighborhood Impact and Feeding America show the number of our neighbors in Deschutes, Jefferson, and Crook county who worry about feeding their families has increased by nearly 30 percent since the onset of the pandemic. Many were already struggling to get food on the table before the pandemic hit.

The numbers have skyrocketed to nearly 40,000 families in our area who have relied on food pantries on a monthly basis in 2021. In comparison, 28,000 individuals were utilizing food pantry resources each month pre-COVID-19. Many dimensions and factors overlap and contribute to hunger; in the face of this complex issue, the nonprofit, Seed to Table Oregon (S2T), is increasing efforts to ensure that a lack of

fresh foods is not a symptom of the COVID-19 pandemic.

When funds get tight, often one of the first things cut is low-calorie items, such as fresh veggies. Nutritious, organic and local produce not only contains a vast array of vitamins and minerals, but also brings a sense of community connection. Decreasing consumption of these foods can impact overall health and vitality. Local food banks and the community have done an amazing job of stepping up to support increased demands at the two local food pantries. However, local produce offerings still face various challenges due to the need for refrigeration, weekly deliveries, and quicker expiration.

The food pantries cannot simply receive a month’s worth of lettuce in one go, unlike other staple items.

Seed to Table Oregon believes access to fresh food

See **HUNGER** on page 22

City of Sisters Free Residential Yard Debris & Bulk Waste Cleanup

Tuesday, May 4 or
Wednesday, May 5, 2021

Free collection is for the City of Sisters residents only. Collection will be the same day as your regular trash service day.

Acceptable Items Include:

- Up to 4 yards of yard debris and/or miscellaneous household waste (4 yards = a regular pickup truck filled to the cab)
- Please separate yard debris
- Up to 4 appliances



No sod, rocks, dirt, large furniture (i.e., couches), mattresses, toilets, tires or hazardous waste. Branches cannot exceed 4' in length or 4" in diameter.

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