

LETTERS

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a mask, she became happier, more confident, and engaged in the learning process. She never complained about wearing a mask and was willing to make the sacrifice needed. I am really proud of her.

Besides having the parent perspective of mask wearing, I am also a teacher in a local school district. Luckily, our students and staff were able to do in-person learning, either hybrid or full time, for the entire 2020-21 year (except for a four-week distance-learning break around the holidays). We wore masks the whole time. Was it hard? Yes, it really was at times ... AND ... it was a great opportunity to teach our students that we can all do hard things. That we can persevere through adversity and make sacrifices for others. Did our students learn and grow last year? Absolutely!

It was a year full of challenges and laughter, math and fun. And we did it ALL with our masks on.
Shawn Steele



To the Editor:

Thank you for the careful, extensive reporting on the recent School Board meeting. We have such a need, in these trying times, for clear and clean journalism, free of spin or propaganda.

I was saddened to hear of this eruption of hateful, arrogant, belligerent bullying and badgering. This has become a common attitude among a certain crowd, but remains a shocking affront to responsible civil behavior. My condolences to the board members, taking a beating while dealing as best they can with a complicated and challenging pandemic. How does this end, all the yelling and screaming and fighting? Can't we do better than this?

John Rahm



To the Editor:

I cut out the "Tensions over masking at school board meeting" report in last Wednesday's edition. I taped the article to my refrigerator. I don't think it will age well. The shrill rhetoric and bombastic

threats from anti-vaxxers and anti-maskers were, as usual, over the top. Most impressive was the inclusion of plenty of right-wing code words in their attacks on Board members: CRT, communism, Marxism, BLM, transgender.

However, there was one indisputable fact missing: The virus doesn't care about your politics, your race, your gender, your sexual orientation, or your age. What needed to be discussed was the rapid deterioration of our healthcare system in the face of the delta variant of COVID-19. I trust that the unvaccinated will stay home when they contract the "hoax." Our hospitals are reaching capacity. Nine out of ten COVID-19 patients are unvaccinated, therefore the coming crisis could have been prevented.

Dean Billing



To the Editor:

After reading the report of a recent Sisters School Board meeting, I was motivated to express my view regarding the mask mandate for K-12 students.

I am guided by public health experts in this matter. I write to support School Superintendent Curt Scholl and elected members of the Sisters School Board. They are obeying the law and trying to provide a safe environment for children and youth to attend school in person.

To protect myself and others, I obtained the vaccine at the earliest opportunity. Most reasonable people would agree that it's irresponsible for people to drive while drunk. Innocent people can be harmed. Likewise, when citizens decline the vaccine or decline to wear a mask in public, indoor spaces, they can harm innocent people by spreading the virus.

Carolyn Gabrielson



To the Editor:

Reading the August 11 articles by Mr. Kanzig, Bartlett, and Editor Cornelius regarding the negative resistance to mask-wearing indoors, as ordered by our governor, disappoints me!

Mr. Kanzig quoted nine people, even a

Redmond resident who had no business taking our School Board's time, railing against masks for unsupported reasons. They used excuses like "torturing kids, mental and physical health dangers, no dead kids from summer school, oxygen deprivation" and accusations that the School Board had not done research. Then Mr. Bartlett emphasized the "frustration" of mask-fatigue and the "confusion" of changing CDC recommendations, again quoting negative remarks to cast doubt.

However neither of these authors acknowledged the virulent nature of this evolving virus that even science cannot fully predict, nor how few loud, negative voices are really resisting what the medical and scientific experts urge us to understand. Neither reinforced the high rate of transmission of the delta variant that is now hitting young children across the U.S., the benefits of masks that prevent the aerosol droplets from breathing, talking, and laughing from spreading, the risk unvaccinated people pose for others, and the fact that vaccinated folks can carry and spread the virus without having symptoms themselves.

How about some reasons why the Governor is trying to keep us safe? How about the fact that Oregon had lower rates of infection through the months BECAUSE of her mandates.

Then Editor Cornelius fanned the flames by using inflammatory language like "pushing masks" and "causing people to doubt the vaccine," when he too could have supported the lean toward safety for all instead of pandering to the naysayers!

How about recognizing that less than a dozen voices rudely disrupted the Board meeting and many of the same 20 people rallied on Sunday to protest masks? How about interviewing the hundreds or maybe thousands of folks in Sisters Country who dislike masks but care enough about others to willingly wear them again. How about my 3-year-old granddaughter who has worn a mask since age 2 with no complaints? How about a headline stating, SISTERS COUNTRY SUPPORTS MASKS, quoting only people who understand the need for and value of masks. I can rattle off dozens of names without even trying, and maybe the hospital directors and health

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