

## Schools: Some will continue to offer online learning

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Under state rules, the district can only put so many students on a bus and must separate students into cohorts in classrooms and on buses. In a normal school year, the district might run around 24 or 25 bus trips to get students to school. This year, the district is running nearly double that number.

"If they loosen (social distance rules) up and do it in a safe manner, that will allow us to be able to free up the bus schedule to get more kids in session," said Craig Hoppes, the superintendent for the Astoria School District.

Seaside faces similar issues, said Superintendent Susan Penrod. She said among the biggest challenges to bringing back all students full time are social distance requirements, including the need to provide a minimum of 35 square feet per person in a classroom.

"If that is loosened up, that does allow for more students," she said.

The Warrenton-Hammond School District, which has had students in classrooms consistently when possible since the start of the school year, is able to bus students in, but faces challenges when it comes to sustaining the staff it built up to meet the needs of the school

*IT'S JUST A WAY WE'RE DEVELOPING EDUCATION AS WE GO. AND IF WE DON'T WE'LL END UP LOSING THOSE KIDS.'*

Craig Hoppes | superintendent for the Astoria School District

year.

The school district created extra classrooms and hired more teaching staff as state social distancing requirements meant they had to spread students out across multiple classrooms.

"We know (school) could be what it is now," Superintendent Tom Rogozinski said. "We could continue that, except that it's financially tough to sustain."

Bill Fritz, the superintendent of the Knappa School District, doesn't expect much clarity from the state on what districts should plan for until August. He does expect masks to continue to be in the mix. As for everything else — "we'll pivot when that comes."

The state has been learning along with school districts

throughout the pandemic, Hoppes said, but he hopes any new guidance will be provided in a "timely manner that allows us to plan appropriately."

"School districts are a big machine," he said. "You just don't turn on a dime and change overnight."

### Pandemic-era changes

Some school districts do plan to hold on to certain pandemic-era changes, regardless of state guidance.

Throughout the pandemic, there have been concerns about the toll of distance learning on students' emotional well-being, whether they were engaged with classes and which students were being left behind through online schooling.

The pandemic also led some families to question how they wanted to educate their children, and the best way their children learned. Some were worried about exposure to the virus and returning to school too soon. Others found they craved more flexibility. They turned to home schooling, online academies, online charter schools or the online coursework offered through school districts.

Now, as certain districts open up to allow more students back in-person, administrators know there are a number of students who thrived

online and families who discovered remote learning worked well for them.

Knappa, Warrenton and Astoria all plan to offer online schooling into the future. The Seaside School District may also continue with an online option, but will survey families before making a decision.

Rogozinski knows some of the families in his school district prefer an online alternative but don't want to completely disconnect from the school district.

In Astoria, children who stay online will still be a part of the district, able to participate in extracurricular activities in-person like any other student. Right now, about 25% of district students have opted to stay entirely remote — a statistic reflected in other districts across the county and state.

While that number will likely go down next school year with more students returning in-person, Hoppes anticipates some will want to continue online.

"We know that we have to do something to support those students next year, and I think for years to come," he told school board members at a recent meeting.

"It's just a way we're developing education as we go," he added, "and if we don't we'll end up losing those kids."

## Wyden: 'There are better times ahead'

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Wyden said he and colleagues worked hard to ensure that seafood was included among the commodities that can be purchased using \$4 billion allocated in the relief package to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"We think that this really could be of help to seafood processors on the coast who are really under very difficult pressure to be able to stay afloat," the senator said.

As chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, Wyden played an integral role in crafting the latest stimulus, which he called the largest package of jobless assistance in U.S. history.

The act includes more than \$230 million to Oregonians in rental assistance, Wyden said, along with \$35 million to help homeowners. He said he had spoken with Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen on how to get relief out quickly.

Wyden was hopeful about a renewed focus on

a raft of issues, including housing, homelessness, mental health and drug prices, under President Joe Biden and a Democrat-controlled Congress. He blamed Sen. Mitch McConnell, a Republican from Kentucky and the former Senate majority leader, for blocking bipartisan legislation, such as the Prescription Drug Pricing Reduction Act that Wyden introduced with Sen. Chuck Grassley, a Republican from Iowa, to prevent price increases higher than inflation on commonly used medications.

"Now, as you know, the Congress has changed hands," Wyden said. "And I can tell you the leadership of both the House and the Senate is committed to getting action now on holding down prices."

Noting a spike in mental health crises during the pandemic, Wyden touted the Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets Act he introduced with several other senators. The bill grants states three years of enhanced Medicaid funding for community based response to mental health and substance abuse crises. It is modeled after the

CAHOOTS program from the White Bird Clinic in Eugene.

Saturday marked the one-year anniversary of the killing of Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky, by police executing a no-knock search warrant. Earlier this month, the House passed the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, named for the Minnesota man who was killed in May after an officer knelt on his neck for several minutes.

The legislation would ban chokeholds like the one used on Floyd and no-knock warrants in drug cases like the one used to raid Taylor's apartment. It would overhaul the doctrine of qualified immunity for law enforcement and create a national database of police misconduct.

The bill faces an uncertain future in the Senate, where it needs Republican votes to pass. Wyden said he supports the legislation.

Since joining the Senate in 1996, Wyden has pushed to expand mail-in voting, used in Oregon for more than

two decades and temporarily adopted around the U.S. during the November election in response to the pandemic. Republican legislators across the country have introduced dozens of bills to make it harder to vote, basing the efforts on unsupported claims of voter fraud.

"We've got stop the efforts to suppress the vote, and then we have to promote fresh ways to expand it," Wyden said. "The Oregon way works. It's cost-effective. We have not had fraud."

Americans forwarded their clocks one hour at 2 a.m. Sunday for eight months of daylight saving time, before pushing them back an hour in November. Wyden said he supports the Sunshine Protection Act introduced by Sen. Marco Rubio, a Republican from Florida, to make daylight saving time permanent.

Livestreaming the virtual town hall from the offices of The Astorian, Wyden remarked on the sunny Saturday afternoon and people he saw hanging out downtown.

"It really reflected on the proposition that there are better times ahead," he said.

**THE ACT INCLUDES MORE THAN \$230 MILLION TO OREGONIANS IN RENTAL ASSISTANCE**

## County reports four new virus cases

The Astorian

Clatsop County on Friday reported four new coronavirus cases. The cases include a man and a

woman in their 20s and a woman in her 30s living in the northern part of the county. A man in his 50s living in the southern part of the county also tested positive for the virus.

All four were recovering at home. The county has recorded 791 cases since the pandemic began. According to the county, 18 were hospitalized and six have died.

## Eaton: 'When I stop and contact people I will listen'

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like school drunken-driving awareness programs or taking kids to "shop-with-a-cop."

But it offered challenges. "In your hometown, you are going to stop people — and people that you know pretty well," he said.

For minor offenses, options of a verbal or written warning or a ticket offer flexibility. "I probably gave people one break, but they then know I'm out here," he said. "They get one opportunity and then they know that I had to do what I have to do."

Eaton admits he became somewhat hardened. "When I first started, I was naive. I would take what people threw at me," he said. "But about eight or nine years in, I started being ... I found that my grace has disappeared."

"I never had any real issues

with anybody," he added. "I feel like I have done a pretty good job being as professional as I can. When I stop and contact people I will listen, but I'm not going to start an argument about it."

Eaton signed up as a cadet during the week of rioting in Los Angeles after the police beating of Rodney King was caught on video. In the intervening 30 years, support for law enforcement has diminished. He has mixed views about recommending it as a career. "It's a lot harder for me to do that," he said.

"In my first seven or eight years on the freeway, I never wore my (bulletproof) vest," he recalled. "Maybe that was feeling young and 'invincible?'"

Now protective gear is mandatory; his Chevrolet Tahoe was equipped with a rifle, as well as a shotgun with

nonlethal rounds.

"You had a feeling then that people were not out to get you," he said. "I feel you have to be way more concerned and on top of your game."

Academy trainees watched a video of officers being shot. "Your No. 1 job is to make it home at night," he said, repeating his instructors' mantra. "You get training and walk up to a car and know what might happen. You must be cordial, but you have to be prepared."

Although he discovered weapons while making arrests, they have never been used to threaten him. "I have never had any really hairy things happen to me," he said. "No one has tried to use a gun against me."

One sad memory was returning from an oil change in Warrenton. A car stopped on top of the Astoria Bridge.

"I thought he had broken down," Eaton said, as he recalled the memory of watching the driver get out and jump to his death. He radioed the U.S. Coast Guard while managing stopped traffic. "There was no eye contact. I didn't have a chance to say anything," he said.

His 1991 academy classmate, Capt. Ron Mead, of Bellevue, attended Eaton's retirement party. "He was a big man with a small voice," Mead chuckled, recalling their first meeting. "You have left the profession and the agency better for your 30 years' service."

That was echoed by his supervisor, Sgt. Brad Moon. "He is just a natural leader, a calm and humble person, not easily excitable, and he is good with people at the scene (of an accident)," he said. "It's not just a motto: 'service with humility.'"

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