



R.J. Marx/The Astorian

The former Broadway Middle School could be used for dorms for seasonal workers.

## Dorms: Interest in former middle school has been high

Continued from Page A1

the park district revenue of about 75% of the new mortgage annually in the four months of summer.

“Our group has already gotten more financial pledges than is needed to complete this project,” Posalski said.

When businesses aren’t housing employees, the dorms could be used by the park district.

“The newly built-out facility would provide facilities for overnight camp type events, cooking classes, indoor movie nights, craft and game retreats as well as many other uses we haven’t thought about,” Posalski said. “These would be great opportunities for the community that also generate revenue for the district.”

Interest in the former

middle school, renamed the Sunset Recreation Center, has been high.

At a park district workshop earlier this month, the Northwest Regional Education Service District expressed interest in the facility as “the ideal hub” for their services. The service district is in the process of selling their 29,000-square-foot Clatsop Service Center location in Astoria and is seeking a space to lease. They hope to downsize to a 7,600-square-foot space in the Sunset Recreation Center.

Areas of interest to the service district include three classrooms along the southwest corner of the building, the computer lab adjacent to the library, administrative office space and a counseling room.

“If you’d like me to ini-

tiate discussion about potential agreement or revise the proposed plan that they offered, I’m happy to do that,” Sklyer Archibald, the park district’s executive director, told board members. “I think that there was general excitement about their proposal, but just wasn’t sure exactly what direction the board wanted staff to take on this.”

Board member Celeste Bodner volunteered to work with Archibald and the service district to weigh potential terms.

Board member Michael Hinton called the service district proposal a good fit. “I’m in favor of supporting this and I would work with Celeste, if need be,” Hinton said. “She’s got a lot of capacity in real estate experience herself, so I think that’s a great offer.”



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Schools are relaxing mask rules as more people are vaccinated against the coronavirus.

## Schools: Knappa’s school year will be extending into late June

Continued from Page A1

For more than a year, face masks have been fogging up eye glasses, impeding peripheral vision and making it difficult to hear and understand one another. But it turns out the seemingly simple act of removing them is not so easy for some people.

Some Astoria staff, after verifying their vaccination status, opted to keep their masks on — which is fine, Hoppes said.

“You work so hard to get masks on people, now it’s hard to get them off,” he said.

But this hesitancy is part of why he opted to move forward with easing mask restrictions in the school district just weeks before the end of the school year. He wants to give people time to get used to yet another change.

**KNAPPA SUPERINTENDENT BILL FRITZ ESTIMATES THAT AROUND 75% OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT’S EMPLOYEES ARE VACCINATED.**

“For us, everything we do is a slow transition to ‘somewhat normalcy,’” Hoppes said. “By doing this, it just gives us opportunities to move forward.”

Knappa Superintendent Bill Fritz estimates that around 75% of the school district’s employees are vaccinated. This estimate is based on the initial lists of employees who signed up for vaccine appointments through the district earlier in the year and what Fritz has been told by employees who sought out vaccine appointments on their own.

Knappa’s school year is extending late into June and some employees told

Fritz they were comfortable going without masks now that they were vaccinated.

To mask or not to mask within the parameters agreed on by the school district and the education association is optional, however.

“Some of our staff members are still wearing masks and we respect that,” Fritz said.

In the Knappa School District, students, staff, volunteers or visitors can remove their masks for outdoor activities. People must still wear masks or other types of protective mouth and nose coverings when in school buildings.

## Pushback: Brown not moving toward another change of policy

Continued from Page A1

of being berated over the policy. He said some businesses have turned to an honor system.

“I don’t blame those businesses and actually I support them in that because we’ve asked enough of essential workers,” Balensifer said on Facebook Live on Tuesday night. “And for anybody that’s not worked in that line and have had to deal with that, it’s painful for me to observe it let alone hear about it, and it’s even more painful for those experiencing it.”

“The state needs to stop asking that of those people.”

A letter from the National Grocers Association and 10 other major retail groups asked federal health and worker safety officials to stop Brown from requiring employees to ask for and verify vaccination cards. Making front-line workers the gatekeepers and enforcers of state policy was inappropriate and potentially dangerous, the letter said.

Some of the opposition to the plan to require showing proof of vaccination came from politicians and others

who had opposed masks at different points in the pandemic and had lobbied for lifting restrictions on businesses and crowds despite high levels of infection in many areas of the state.

While Rep. Daniel Bonham, R-The Dalles, had criticized Brown’s new policy earlier in the week by noting the strong feelings about masks “on both sides,” the volatility against showing certificates surfaced quickly among opponents of COVID-19 restrictions.

Health officials in Oregon, California and Washington pledged early in the pandemic to work together and keep policies in sync as much as possible.

But the trio of West Coast states — led by Democratic governors — have hardly been monolithic in their responses. California and Washington went much wider, earlier with vaccination priority for all residents 65 and over, while Oregon stuck with a more step-by-step approach of priority groups.

Brown’s boldest initiative has been to require the display of vaccine cards in selected situations. Oregon

health officials wanted residents to be more assured when going to a vaccinated-only area than just the promise of others that they were obeying the law.

The idea of segregated access for those who have been inoculated and those who haven’t hasn’t gained traction in a majority of states, but 14 have created or are working on ways to keep potential virus spreaders away from others. But the sticking point always comes back to how to really know if vaccinated-only areas include only the truly vaccinated.

The most common answer is trust. In a politically fractured nation where masks, vaccines, in-person school instruction and large gatherings have become grist for often hyperventilating debate, that’s a leap of faith. But it’s the approach suggested by the CDC.

For now, Brown is not moving toward another change of policy.

*Nicole Bales of The Astorian contributed to this report. The Oregon Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.*

## Civics: ‘There are only so many hours in the day’

Continued from Page A1

College and has overseas service with the U.S. Air Force and the Oregon Air National Guard. He also was an adviser to Gov. Ted Kulongoski on emergency management, military and veterans issues.

The bill passed the state House in a 60-0 vote on Monday. The Senate approved the bill in a 25-3 vote in April.

Though Rep. Gerald “Boomer” Wright, R-Reedport, voted for the bill, he said lawmakers should be mindful of teaching priorities. Oregon graduation requirements cover two years of social studies — not necessarily civics, even though some school districts already require it — in addition to four years in

English and three years in math.

“When we require things in high school, there are only so many hours in the day,” Wright, a retired teacher and school administrator, said. “Every time we require something, something is not taught that was previously taught. When we want to make sure our students get what we believe is necessary to continue this form of government and support this society, we must remember that when we add something, something disappears.”

The bill emerged from the House Education Committee, led by Rep. Teresa Alonso Leon, D-Woodburn, who said there is a pending bill that would direct the state Department of Education to review social stud-

ies standards with an eye toward teaching a more complete view of the nation.

“It’s also important that we talk about the history and the many people who contributed to the development of our country,” Alonzo Leon said. “These are people who for many years could not vote. I want to make sure those standards cover that piece of history.”

Only 24% of students were proficient or better in civics in the 2018 National Assessment of Educational Progress, otherwise known as the nation’s report card. The average score on civics was 153 of 300, largely unchanged from 150 — 22% proficient — in 1998.

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