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ASTORIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Families will need to make decision on masks

A 3-2 vote by the school board

By **KATIE FRANKOWICZ**
The Astorian

Students and staff in the Astoria School District will not have to wear masks to protect against the coronavirus when they return to school in September regardless of their vaccination status.

The school board voted 3-2 Monday night to leave the choice of masking up to families. Health screenings, frequent hand-washing and other basic pandemic protocols will remain in place. Students and staff will have to wear masks while on school buses, a federal requirement.

School districts across Clatsop County are still absorbing new reopening guidelines released by the state last week, but some are already planning to follow a similar path as Astoria. While the state highly recommended mask-wearing indoors, the decision was left to local school districts.

Alarmed by the spread of the delta variant, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Tuesday recommended that teachers, staff and students of K-12 schools wear masks, even if they are vaccinated, which could increase pressure on school leaders.

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State officials recommend masks as cases surge

Twenty-one new cases reported in county over past few days

By **GRIFFIN REILLY**
and **BRYCE DOLE**

The Astorian and East Oregonian

The Oregon Health Authority has recommended that people wear masks in indoor public settings as coronavirus cases and hospitalizations grow across the state.

The state's guidance on Tuesday came hours after the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended masks, including among people who have been vaccinated against the virus, in portions of the country where the virus is surging because of the delta variant.

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The view from home plate of the softball diamond at Broadway Field.

Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

After federal complaint, Gulls could get level playing fields

School district will improve the softball field

By **R.J. MARX**
The Astorian

SEASIDE — In an agreement a decade in the making, the Seaside School District will improve practice and playing fields for softball to remedy disparities with baseball that deny equal opportunity to female athletes.

The noticeable differences between the baseball and softball diamonds at Broadway Field create potential violations of Title IX, the federal law meant to protect against discrimination in education.

Under a resolution between the school district and the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, the school district must develop a plan to ensure equity between the baseball and softball programs by next June and complete the plan by June 2023.

"The girls softball team has been discriminated against forever," said Randy Anderson, whose daughter, Whitney, was a junior varsity softball player for the Gulls. "From the beginning. They're not an equal part of the school system, the sport system."

Superintendent Susan Penrod said the school district worked collaboratively with the Office for Civil Rights. "We are dedicated to meeting all of these timelines and are working with SEPRD (Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District) and the city of Seaside to determine the best location for the softball facility," she said. "We have already set aside funds to complete this work."

Federal issues

In 2012, Anderson and John Nicolazzi, another parent, filed a lawsuit in federal court alleging the school district failed to permit girls from participating equally with boys.

The lawsuit claimed that female students didn't have comparable athletic facilities as the boys, that they were unable to participate in team sports and



R.J. Marx/The Astorian

A hole is underneath third base on the softball field at Broadway Field.



R.J. Marx/The Astorian

Randy Anderson has sought equal male and female sports facilities in Seaside.

that they had been excluded from the high school's athletic program.

The school district assigned baseball teams to practice and play games on "excellent artificial turf fields while requiring that female softball teams to practice and play on soggy, poorly maintained fields that force female teams to practice in a gym and to forfeit, postpone games and/or travel to other districts to play because the district's fields are unplayable."

That case was dismissed after a settlement in 2014. Terms of the settlement were never publicly released, but the school district responded by adding lights and building a softball diamond at Broadway Field.

Those steps did not change the inequities, Anderson said, and even with lights, conditions for girls hardly improved.

"If I didn't sue them in federal court, that field would not be here right now," Anderson said. "They spent over \$28,000 to build that, and built a Title IX noncompliant field. The girls are plopped on the football field as an afterthought. It's legal size, but they have to set up their own fencing. If you look, the boys have fencing set up, permanent fencing set up all the way around."

"See the foul pole? Boys have foul poles, permanent foul poles. Girls don't. They have to wheel in portable foul poles. The wheels don't work. They have to set up their own fencing."

Dissatisfied with conditions at the softball field, Anderson filed a civil rights complaint in March 2019. The Office for Civil Rights followed up.

"They spent two days up here, went through all the facilities, all the playing fields," Anderson said. "They did interviews with coaches, players and staff. They came to their determination about the softball field because they found discrepancies, disparity between the girls softball and the boys baseball, and now the district has to do something."

According to findings accompanying the agreement, the Office for Civil Rights said "softball athletes indicated that pitchers would get their foot caught in a hole in the pitching circle and that athletes had to avoid a hole, used for the football goal post, located on the third base line to avoid injury."

The infield did not have a softball pitching circle permanently marked, and according to the softball athletes and the softball coach, they were responsible for spray-painting the pitching circle.

As Anderson described, softball athletes and the softball coach set up and

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Obelisk Beer Co.

Nathan Lampson, left, and Dave Coyne plan to open Obelisk Beer Co. in Astoria.

Obelisk Beer Co. to open in Astoria

New brewery planned for Columbia Fruit space

By **EMILY LINDBLOM**
The Astorian

The beer town of the coast is expecting to add another brewery to its repertoire.

Dave Coyne and Nathan Lampson plan to open Obelisk Beer Co. in Astoria in 2022.

"Hopefully, people can look forward to good times and delicious

beer in our taproom soon," Coyne said.

Lampson said he and Coyne are excited about creating a small-scale brewery and having an intimate relationship with the beer they're making.

"Also to directly contribute our voice within the beer industry with full autonomy as far as sourcing ingredients and creating designs and packaging," Lampson said.

"It's such a wonderful industry to work in and it's filled with a lot of people who are passionate about the

community and where the ingredients come from," Coyne added.

The two plan to produce oak-inspired, barrel-aged beers, as well as pub-style and hoppy beer varieties.

Obelisk is a loose reference to the shape of the Astoria Column. Although "obelisk" is not exactly

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