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"It has to be very tastefully done," Wood said. "With that in mind, I wanted to bring into the scene elements that might appeal to the population here on the Oregon coast, such as a lighthouse, like Heceta Head Lighthouse, in the distance."

His idea evolved into a scene of a mermaid on a rock with a sea lion below and an

American ship sailing into the harbor in the distance.

"It harkens back to fantasy, like a children's book cover from the golden age of illustration with sailing ships and mermaids and that type of thing," Wood said.

Once they agreed on the concept, Clawson began the process of getting approval from the city, which has specific regulations for public murals.

"Getting it through the city council can take an inordinate amount of time," said Wood.

Funding the mural became another issue after Clawson's business took a hit from the coronavirus pandemic.

At that time, a friend of Clawson's suggested that she start a GoFundMe page, a popular way of crowdfunding. The GoFundMe page reached its goal of \$5,000 in

just a couple months, all of which will go towards the cost of supplies and compensation for Wood's time and effort.

"I think everybody seems to have rallied at the bat," said Wood. "The whole town got really excited about it and donated, even the mayor. So, we arrived at a monetary level we needed pretty quickly."

In the meantime, Claw-

son and Wood are still waiting for final approval from the City of Florence to move forward.

"We'll see what happens, but I think it's a slam dunk," said Wood.

When the mural is finished, he hopes that it will be something visitors and community members alike will take a moment to notice and enjoy.

"It should be a symbol of

what we value here on the Oregon coast, both temporarily and historically," said Wood. "I hope it's just a nice appealing image for children and adults to enjoy and remember Florence for."

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SIUSLAW NEWS

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"But as summer went along and custodians were setting classrooms up, we realized that while, yes, 25 students could fit in a classroom with six feet of physical distancing between them, the logistics of that was not necessarily possible," O'Mara said.

At that point, the district began transitioning toward a hybrid model. But staff did not solidify their plans, knowing that additional announcements from the state would be made. Then in late July, Brown instituted new restrictions on opening, based on state and county COVID-19 case rates, as well as local conditions.

"So with the governor's announcement, that solidified our plans," O'Mara said. "Now, we're in comprehensive distance learning, based on the metrics."

State guidelines do allow for districts to open onsite instruction for K-3 students, if certain transmission metrics are met. However, Mapleton has opted not to pursue the option.

"Part of that is that there are so many unknowns about the virus," O'Mara said. "I know currently what the data says regarding younger children spreading the disease, and how severely they get sick. But it's hard to understand how a third grader can come to school, but a fourth grader can't. And so we just decided to make it district wide. We're going to have several K-3 students that have siblings at home, and so we just decided to wait until metrics are met for all students to come back on campus."

To help accommodate and train for distance learning, the district has moved its starting date to Sept. 14.

To provide help for parents and students working at home, the district will be holding small, in person one-on-one sessions before school begins to teach new protocols.

"We'll do a little bit of an assessment for our smaller kids, just to know where they're at with reading and math," O'Mara said. "But mainly, it's to just let kids and families know how to log in, the technology and what the expecta-

tions are for attendance. 'And here's a schedule for your online learning. Here's your schedule.' It's really well laid out, along with office hours for teachers."

During orientation, each student will also be getting a Chromebook to use at home.

"K-2 are getting touch-screen Chromebooks. We thought that was developmentally more appropriate, rather than trying to manipulate a mouse. And then grades 3-8 will be getting regular Chromebooks, while our high schoolers already have them."

The district will also be assessing internet connectivity within households.

"We're going to be able to get down to the nitty gritty to find out what connectivity issues are in their household," O'Mara said. "Is it a problem when all kids are on the internet at the same time? We can then adjust our schedules to meet that. If all three shouldn't be on at the same time, then we'll adjust our schedule to make sure they're not."

As far as online learning itself, the district has worked to develop comprehensive programs.

"There is a lot that goes into online learning, especially to keep students safe when they are online," O'Mara said. "We're really focused on making it developmentally appropriate. That's really important, especially for our littles. We have to make sure they don't have more screen time than what they should have. And that's challenging."

Once distance learning begins, the district has worked to make communication between teachers, parents and students easier by having teachers on school grounds throughout the week.

"We need to have easy communication for our families," O'Mara said. "They need to be able to call the elementary office and say, 'Hi I need to talk to Mrs. Tempe.' So we can transfer them to Mrs. Tempe. It's simple, easy, one phone number to call instead of multiple phone numbers for different teachers."

As for class schedules, middle and high school students will have a seven-period day schedule with shortened pe-

riods, four days a week. Elementary students will have a slightly different schedule.

"What we've scheduled for the rest of the grades is odd-numbered grade levels will have online instruction with their teachers on Monday and Wednesday," O'Mara said. "Tuesday and Thursday will be a short, 30-minute check-in for reading and math with educational assistance, as well as a hands-on art activity and a PE activity that they can do offline."

Even-numbered grades will have the same schedule, just opposite days.

O'Mara also pointed out that nutritional services will be provided to students daily through bus routes.

As to when the schools will determine whether or not they will transition to a hybrid model with some days onsite, it will not be until at least October.

"Every four to five weeks, I have it scheduled to look at metrics," O'Mara said. "I will be monitoring them every week to see if it's close to having three weeks of meeting the metrics. If the metrics are met, we'll determine when we're transitioning to hybrid. We'll then make natural transition times. There's a good time in October. It will take a few days, but we're hoping it

will be a quick transition."

O'Mara pointed out that if Mapleton does transition to a hybrid model, students will have the ability to remain in comprehensive distance learning if they feel uncomfortable transitioning.

To help with determining whether or not the school can go to a hybrid model, O'Mara is asking families to communicate any confirmed COVID-19 cases with the district.

"Right now, Lane County Public Health won't release the numbers to anyone for any of the zip codes within our school district, because they all have less than 1,000 in the population," O'Mara said. "I know just from hearing from people that have told me, there were five new cases in Western Lane County, 'outside of the Florence area.' It's either Dunes City or up in the Mableton area. We're supposed to keep track of cases, but that relies heavily on families letting the school know, 'Hey, someone in my family has it so we're in isolation for two weeks.' There will be a lot of relying on our families to communicate that with us, knowing that it will be kept confidential. We need to know so we can keep the rest of the community safe as well."

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