

Making up the learning lost

Think the pandemic was bad for K-12 education? Hurricane Katrina in 2005 set a standard for education devastation that is hard to match.

Some schools were completely closed in New Orleans for months. Many families could not return to their old schools. Some families moved schools and homes multiple times. The pandemic has hurt almost every K-12 student. But in education, compared to Katrina, we're pretty lucky.

Katrina research does offer local educators lessons about getting students back where they should be. One lesson: It will take time to make up any learning loss. Bend's Interim Superintendent Lora Nordquist said it might take years to get some students caught up. And the Redmond officials we spoke with agreed. Seat time before a screen doesn't equal seat time in school — for most students.

Bend schools estimate about 40% of students experienced some sort of quantifiable learning loss. Attendance was one measure. Failing grades was another. About 45 to 50 percent of middle and high school students performed extremely poorly in at least one class. The third measure the district saw a drop in was in performance in online tools, such as Lexia for reading.

Linda Seeberg, executive director of academic programs for Redmond schools, says she believes all Redmond students experienced some "unfinished learning." Similar to Bend, there were attendance issues. Students didn't perform as expected on assessments. Among high school students there was a credit deficiency rate — such as a failed class — of about 35%.

How do schools catch students back up?

There's no secret sauce. It's about teachers and staff who have already been stretched by distance learning, stretching more now to ensure gaps are closed.

Stephanie Wilcox, an elementary instructional coach in Redmond, gave us a good concrete example. It's about prioritizing educational

goals and using proven teaching techniques.

For instance, in fourth grade in Oregon, students are supposed to get an understanding of the concept of fractions. What does it mean to be one-third of something and so on. That is the primary educational goal. Secondly, it's great if students can learn about things like multiplying fractions. That, though, would be a bonus. Wilcox can help teachers with ways to teach the concepts that can be more effective.

Of course, it is not ideal that there will be less progress on secondary goals. This can be a way, though, to focus in and ensure students hit the set targets.

In Bend, Nordquist ticked off several ways the district hopes to help students. They will be able to keep their iPads over the summer. The iPads will be loaded with academic tools. If elementary students dip in four times a week or so and work on their reading and math skills, it can make a big difference. High school students can make up credits through an online program. Some teachers will be available at schools.

In both Bend and Redmond, staff know distance learning exacerbated problems that some students were already having. They do have a sense of who they are. They are making efforts to reach out and help.

The learning lost is one more reason than usual to pay attention to the school board elections this May, if you have one in your community. Some candidates may be running out of more — let's say — a single-minded frustration because of the way their district handled the pandemic. That is an important issue. We'd argue the better target to look for in candidates is to find those which you believe are aiming for policies that will truly help students learn. Follow the articles in The Bulletin and check out the forums put on by the League of Women Voters at cityclubco.org/past-forums.

Bend is bringing the eraser to parking requirements

Minimum parking requirements for buildings in Bend seem almost certain to be on their way out. At least, that was the impression we got from last week's Bend City Council meeting.

Businesses and developers can't start erasing parking lots, yet. Councilors did direct staff to bring forward plans for changing regulations.

Is it what Bend residents want? If it is what you want, you should tell councilors. If it is not, you should tell them that, too. Email councilors at council@bendoregon.gov. Watch what happens at the city's community building subcommittee for de-

velopments and details. That's where this discussion seems to be headed next.

Less parking without other good options for people to get around town is asking for trouble. How easy is it right now for people to walk, bike or take the bus where they need to go? It's not. That's much more complicated and expensive for councilors to solve than changing city parking regulations.

The commitment from councilors to change parking regulations is clear. Where is the action to ensure it will be easy for everyone to get around?



Zavier Borja for Bend parks and rec

BY ROGER A. SABBADINI

Please vote for Xavier Borja in the upcoming May election. Here is my reasoning in favoring Mr. Borja for the Bend Park & Recreation District board of directors:

In making hiring decisions, the life experiences are not often valued or accepted as sources of knowledge because they do not fit into conventional authoritative frameworks or traditional academic disciplines.

Many of us in business or academia have experienced conflicts when choosing between one applicant who had impeccable academic credentials and another candidate who was highly qualified in that regard but brings to the table their life's experiences as a person of color (POC) or represents another underrepresented group.

When running the numbers, life experiences are difficult to quantify but should be considered highly valuable for the constituents (e.g., the public) served by that person. What they know, others can never learn. Special knowledge can come from a world view shaped by one's life history.

While it is possible for a person to learn on the job and add to their library of facts about a subject, it is impossible for a person to learn the cultural influences that have taken a lifetime of another to experience.

With this argument in mind, I would like you to consider voting for Xavier Borja, who is running for position 4 on the board of directors. Zavi

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Sabbadini

is a first-generation Mexican American who was born and raised here in Bend.

This energetic young man has worked on many community organizing projects that have focused on advancing recreation youth programs for persons of color, including his role as founder of the Central Oregon chapter of Latino Outdoors.

I would like to argue that Zavi has the experiential knowledge that the board is lacking, and this makes him uniquely qualified to address a critical unmet need in our community — POC do not use parks, trails and other amenities even though they pay taxes to support those facilities. I would argue that it is the fiduciary responsibility of the district to address this as an unmet need.

It is clear to many of us that POCs do not take advantage of the recreational facilities enjoyed by most of Bend's other residents. This is a problem recognized by the district board and may be the most important issue addressed in the coming year. It is a problem not unique to Bend and has been recognized by regional parks and the National Park System nationwide.

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for lack of participation have been identified as issues of transportation, fear of discrimination, cultural differences and economic concerns, not in any order.

It will be important for the park district to apply the metrics used by other communities to determine which factors are at play in our city that cause the 20,000 Latinx folks of Bend not to use our facilities. Here in Bend, the solution to this issue will best be found if Xavier Borja is elected to the park board. His special knowledge as an underserved minority and his access to the Latinx community will best serve that unmet need.

■ Roger A. Sabbadini lives in Bend and is an emeritus distinguished professor of biology at San Diego State University.

Letters policy

We welcome your letters. Letters should be limited to one issue, contain no more than 250 words and include the writer's signature, phone number and address for verification. We edit letters for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject poetry, personal attacks, form letters, letters submitted elsewhere and those appropriate for other sections of The Bulletin. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days.

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Your submissions should be between 550 and 650 words; they must be signed; and they must include the writer's phone number and address for verification. We edit submissions for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject those submitted elsewhere. Locally submitted columns alternate with national columnists and commentaries. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days.

How to submit

Please address your submission to either My Nickel's Worth or Guest Column and mail, fax or email it to The Bulletin. Email submissions are preferred.

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Editorials reflect the views of The Bulletin's editorial board, Publisher Heidi Wright, Editor Gerry O'Brien and Editorial Page Editor Richard Coe. They are written by Richard Coe.

Development will overload the area on Century Drive

BY DOUG MEYER

Two thousand three hundred and twenty-nine. 2,329.

That is the number of daily "trips" predicted by the official traffic study that will be added to the current traffic in and out of the Pine Ridge Renovation complex slated to be built in place of the quaint Pine Ridge Inn on Colorado.

That traffic will arrive and depart the property on four streets — Reed Market, Century, Colorado, the two traffic circles at Century and Colorado, and the other circle at Mt. Washington and Century.

I'm sure the developers noticed that currently, during ski season, Century can be backed up for a mile or so, and Reed Market can be brought to a standstill in both directions. When

the Mt. Washington middle school traffic is added in, gridlock ensues. Century stops. Reed stops. Mt. Washington stops. And, the college isn't even close to full capacity yet. Well, stopped is stopped after all, and you'll just be stopped for a while longer.

"The city" thinks this as all OK and that the additional 2,329 automobile trips per day won't be a problem. Now, to be fair, they did ask us (per the regulations) if we objected.

They put up the two little signs on the bank at the Pine Ridge for all of us to read (if we looked up on the bank and were looking the "right" way on the one way, at least for a while, until they got ripped up by the weather.) Then, they put up new ones for a while. The fact that you would have to park and walk up the bank to read

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them didn't seem to be a problem. Nor did the fact that the expected "comments" were clearly not being generated.

Could it be that all the folks who lived "within" 250 feet didn't care? Oh wait, just about nobody lives within even 500 feet. They got seven objections. Seven people sent email comments objecting to a proposed commercial development second only to the university in its magnitude. Does that make sense? No matter, I guess the planners figured everybody else must love it. This all occurred during COVID shutdown, mind you, when there were not the usual public hearings, discussions, presentations and

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press coverage. Guess that didn't seem odd to them.

This development, if completed, will tower about 150 feet above the river below, looking down on the Healy Bridge.

It will dominate the skyline against the mountains when viewed from the parkway and Bond Street.

It will add approximately 50 pounds of automotive particulate matter, according to my calculations,

(which is a lot because it is gases and dust) to the atmosphere and nearby streets per year.

I really don't think this project is something we should be doing, do you? It is wrong on so many levels. Please let the city know that.

They're trying to put one over on us. Don't let 'em get away with it.

For photos, search KOHD "Pine Ridge."

■ Doug Meyer lives in Bend.