



## Back to school with excitement, trepidation

By KATHERINE LACAZE  
Seaside Signal

For most kindergartners and first-graders in Seaside, school's back in session — or more specifically, back on campus.

Pacific Ridge Elementary School was alive with a distinctly "first-day-of-school" vibe last Tuesday, when in-person instruction resumed for a couple cohorts of young students.

"It's definitely a very similar energy to September, August," assistant principal Jeremy Catt said, noting his own elementary-aged student was so excited she was up, dressed and ready to go in the early morning. As students arrived and connected with the teachers they previously knew only from Zoom interactions, Catt said, "There was a lot of, 'I know you.'"

"Today was definitely a 'bucket-filler,'" he said. "It was great to see and feel that energy of being back at school that we've missed for so long. You can't replicate that online."

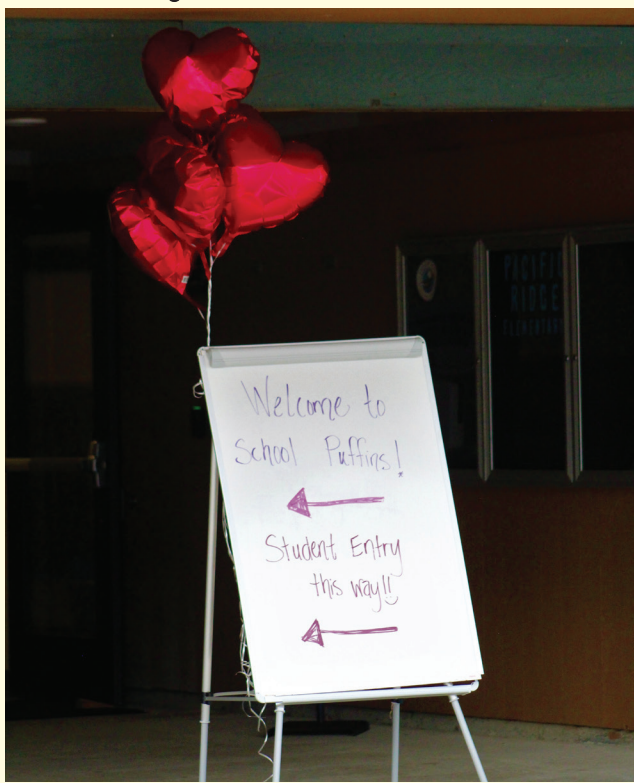
The excitement was accompanied by a bit of trepidation and uncertainty. Principal Juli Wozniak said she could see the emotion in the eyes of parents who were dropping their kids off at school for the first time. The whole

situation was made more unusual because parents and guardians couldn't go inside the building or visit their student's classroom, as would be tradition, because of COVID-19 restrictions.

"Overall, they were happy to give them a hug at the car," Wozniak said.

The returning students have been split into two cohorts. Half of the students come for instruction in the morning on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. They are picked up and dropped off by their guardians. The other half of the students — who take the bus to and from the elementary school — arrive in the

See School, Page A5



Photos by Katherine Lacaze

TOP: Pacific Ridge Elementary School kindergartners wait to board the bus last Tuesday during their first day back on campus. MIDDLE: A welcome from staff to returning students. ABOVE: Students wait to board the bus after school.

## After delays, construction end in sight

By R.J. MARX  
Seaside Signal

The Seaside School District campus construction project "has a few more months to go but we're moving forward," project manager Jim Henry said at last Tuesday's school board meeting. The project

dashboard shows the budget and schedule behind, while scope and community engagement are on target. Project cost is expected to reach \$131 million. To date, the district has paid about \$127 million in expenses.

The project, authorized by voters by a bond in 2016 to move students from

schools in the tsunami inundation zone, includes completion of exterior work at the middle school and high school building and interior work at Pacific Ridge Elementary School.

In January, elementary school crews finished kitchen and electrical work. At the middle and high school, crews provided

interior finishes and added panels on the west side.

The school district is finishing replacement of 22,000 linear square feet of weather barrier after the first application failed to meet specifications.

"Weather remediation is basically complete on

See Construction, Page A3

## Teachers voice concerns over reopening plans

By KATHERINE LACAZE  
Seaside Signal

Seaside School District is bringing students back to campus in phases, but teachers maintain a variety of concerns, from worry over contracting the coronavirus before receiving the vaccine to not having access to child care.

Kindergartners and first graders started in-person instruction at Pacific Ridge Elementary School last week, with second and third graders set to return March 1 and March 16. Sixth graders were back on campus at Seaside Middle School as of Monday, and Seaside High School has started limited in-person instruction. Cannon Beach Academy is scheduled to resume in-person instruction on March 29.

While the district moves forward with its reopening plans, many teachers remain burdened by stress and a variety of concerns. According to a monthly survey distributed among teachers, the past two months have seen a dramatic increase in teacher anxiety, Seaside Education Association President Chuck Albright told the school board during last week's meeting.

In February, 73% of teachers expressed feeling "more stress than usual" or more stress than they "have ever experienced" — up from 52% in November and 50% in January. While the move from comprehensive distance learning to hybrid instruction is one explanation,

"I think it's more than that," Albright said.

"Digging deeper into the data from these surveys, you notice a thread of discontent growing," he said, adding that the word "comfortable" has been thrown around frequently in the past two weeks. "But there is a difference between being uncomfortable and having concerns."

Teachers have been trying to convey concerns about numerous issues, from rolling out hybrid learning prior to vaccines and the lack of COVID-19 sick days to on-site safety and child care.

"Those concerns were dismissed as just not being in our comfort zone," Albright said. "The fact is, those concerns are real and need to be addressed."

For example, the idea of district-provided child care was brought up during discussions with district administration but "dismissed as not really being something that many members would need," he added. In actuality, on the survey, 90% rated it as either "very important" or "somewhat important," and 12% said they would use it.

When asked whether educator concerns are being considered when decisions are being made, 56% of respondents agreed this was happening at a building level, but only 15% said that is the case with district-level administration and only 14% believe their concerns are being

See Teachers, Page A5

## Five seats open for park district board

By R.J. MARX  
Seaside Signal

The Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Board of Directors consists of five elected members. In June, all five positions will be up for election.

Candidate filings began Feb. 6 and continue until March 18, the last day for district candidates to file declaration or withdrawal.

On Wednesday, John Huisman filed to run for the Position 2 seat. He is a retired businessman with a background in sales and marketing management. On Thursday, Seaside resident Al Hernandez filed for the

Position 1 seat. A retired accounting and financial professional, most recently he was financial officer at Sunset Empire Transportation District. Vice president and secretary Michael Hinton, who holds Position 3, is the board's longest serving member and has served for 19 years. Hinton has more than 45 years experience in appointed and elected positions. He submitted his application for candidacy on Feb. 11.

Katharine Parker, president of the board, represents Position 5. Parker is the head secretary for Seaside High School and has served on the park district board

See Park district, Page A3

## Seaside football looks for return to championship form

By GARY HENLEY  
Seaside Signal

It was a tough start, but a pretty good finish for Seaside football in 2019.

Aaron Tanabe's first year as the Gulls' coach seems like ages ago as the athletic director and head coach

enters his second season after the long break.

The Gulls' last appearance on the field ended in a first round state playoff loss at Marist on Nov. 8, 2019.

The game capped a 4-2 finish for Seaside over the final six games of the 2019 season — a much different look than the start.

Seaside began the season with three straight defeats, which included blowout losses to Marist (35-3) and

Gladstone (34-0).

The Gulls turned it around from there, winning three straight to open league play, before a 34-6 loss at Banks in the rematch of the 2018 state championship game.

Tanabe's team goals this spring are similar to how things played out in the fall of 2019: "Get better at something every day," said Tanabe, the Cowapa

See Football, Page A5



Gary Henley/Seaside Signal

Junior Carson Kawasoe (8) will be calling the signals and throwing passes for the Gulls this season.

