



The Seaside Civic and Convention Center as seen looking west from First Avenue.

Center: Number of events plummeted in 2020

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closed until May 26, the convention center was shuttered for much of the quarter. Bed tax for April through June dropped almost 51%.

Throughout the year the number of attendees of convention center events and meetings fell by three-quarters, dropping from more than 37,000 to 8,000.

The number of events fell from 100 in 2018 to 55 in 2020.

"It plummeted," Heine-man said, referencing visitor interest as measured by website traffic following the

March shutdown. "It was decimated way below what we see in mid-winter doldrums. There was a lot of stress and a lot of fear out there from every perspective you can imagine."

The city donated back \$827,000 in bed tax collected to the lodging properties that collected them for January through March 2020. The visitors bureau also administered a \$250,000 emergency grant program for businesses and the city provided a water service credit as part of this comprehensive relief package, as well.

The convention center reassigned some staff members to the public works department or public library.

The center issued a two-page COVID-19 cleaning guidelines and health guidance document, with emphasis on cleaning, disinfectant, physical distancing, mask practices and food and beverage operations.

The center opened up for smaller local civic groups, including the Rotary and the Seaside Downtown Development Association.

"It gave them the ability to meet face-to-face when everyone was working on

Zoom," Vandenberg said. "You need social interaction, you need to shake their hands, look them in the eye, see what they're thinking, feeling."

Demand for convention space will return to outpace supply, he added. "Our priorities have not changed, just realigned to match current guidelines and restrictions," he said. "Even though I am seeing what I hope is the end of this pandemic, for us to recover it's going to be when the state lifts all restrictions and we're able to operate at full capacity."

Special education: 'It's the right thing to do'

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Seaside in the mix, that cost could jump to \$35,000 per student.

The Astoria School District and the Warrenton-Hammond School District, which supply the remaining consortium classrooms to their own students, as well as those from Knappa and Jewell, plan to continue with the consortium for now but will need to evaluate their involvement going forward.

"We'll agree to this one year at a time until we feel comfortable with it," Astoria Superintendent Craig Hoppes told the school board at a recent meeting. "But for right now, I think it's the right thing to do."

Students enrolled in consortium programs move around between the school districts that offer these classrooms. Under the agreement, Seaside, for

instance, provided room to North Coast students in kindergarten-through-second grade. If what is offered with the consortium continues to be the best option for certain students to meet their needs, they may move on to classrooms in other districts as they move up in grade levels.

"We're really thankful to our other school districts in the county for the collaboration through the consortium over the years," Penrod said. "It's been wonderful partnering with them and we are really thankful for the consortium teachers in Warrenton and Astoria for their dedication to our students."

But Seaside School District administrators and parents worried what moving back and forth between other districts meant for children. These students might be in classrooms in Astoria and Warrenton until

they returned to their home district in Seaside for the special education classes the district offered at the high school level.

"That was a big concern to parents, that students weren't having an ability, through school, to build relationships with their peers in their neighborhood, in their neighborhood school," Penrod said.

Some families also had students in multiple buildings and across multiple districts. The logistics of getting everyone to the right school in the morning or the pivot that might be necessary if one child became sick at school could be very difficult to manage, said Lynne Griffin, the director of special services for the Seaside School District.

With Seaside's departure, there will be some challenges, noted Travis Roe, director of special programs for the Astoria

School District.

Still, he added, consortium classrooms can look very different from year to year depending on the needs of the students enrolled.

"The reality is our classrooms adjust every year anyway," he said.

The consortium already has teachers who bring with them a wealth of experience across a variety of special needs challenges and programs. In Warrenton, one teacher especially brings "a lot to the table," Roe said. Even with a change in the consortium this year, her presence means the districts still in the consortium already have key resources on hand.

Details of both Seaside's program and what the consortium classrooms will look like without Seaside are still being determined. Seaside plans to begin hiring for its programs this spring.

In-person: Reopening plan follows state guidance

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building, even under these circumstances, has been fantastic," Seaside Middle and High School principal Jeff Roberts said.

Pacific Ridge Elementary School assistant principal Jeremy Catt echoed Roberts' sentiment.

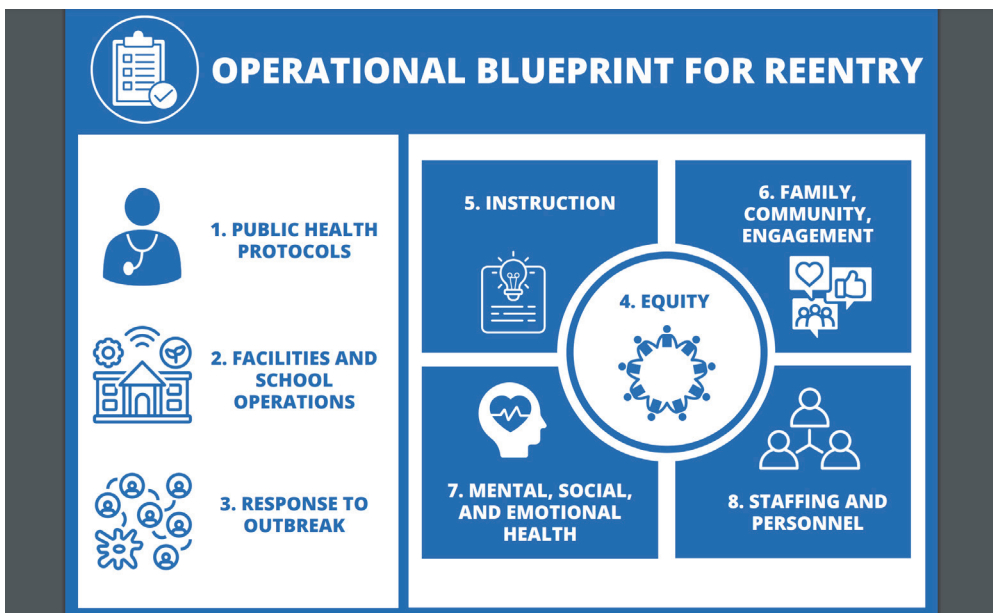
"I feel like I have my old job back and I feel like I'm myself again — walking through the halls, checking in with students, checking in with our new staff that are on-site — so that part has just been really special," Catt said. "I couldn't be more excited for the next couple months."

Not all families are comfortable with having their students return to campus in light of the pandemic. Juli Wozniak, principal of Pacific Ridge, said they still have about 20 students or less per grade level using comprehensive distance learning and about 50 participating in the Online Thrive program through the end of the 2020-21 school year.

"We are currently running three different school options," Wozniak said. "It's quite a challenge, but overall, going well."

The only school that has yet to reopen for on-site instruction is Cannon Beach Academy, but that will change March 29, after spring break.

"We're really looking forward to seeing the joy you guys are seeing and looking forward to having those kids back on campus," executive director Amy Fredrickson.



Operational blueprint for student reentry.

Sherren steps down

The school board accepted the resignation of Seaside Middle and High School assistant principal Steve Sherren, effective at the end of the 2020-21 school year. Sherren and his family are relocating to the Phoenix area. Sherren served as the assistant principal of the former Broadway Middle School for four years — the first school administrator role of his career — before transitioning to assistant principal for sixth through 12th grade.

Having one person helping oversee all six grade levels provided valuable consistency for students, Sherren said.

"I felt very privileged to work for the Seaside School District and the students and families and communities of the district. It's been an honor for

me," Sherren said.

The highlight for him has been interacting "with students on a daily basis and working with them to be successful in whatever they choose they want to do post-high school—helping them realize those aspirations and giving them the skills needed."

Superintendent evaluation

The board is preparing for the annual superintendent evaluation. According to Penrod, three superintendent goals were identified during a recent board training.

These goals are to increase communication about the school district with all stakeholders in the Seaside community; support all staff by equipping them with the training processes to provide compre-

hensive distance learning and hybrid learning for students and families; and successful completion of the new building projects and vacant building sales. Each goal has a number of performance indicators to assist in the evaluation. The board will perform the evaluation during an executive session before the April board meeting and then share a summary of the evaluation at the meeting.

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