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# THE WENATCHEE WORLD



A little rain?

Low: 36 High: 55

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## Parents want return to full-time classes, district survey says

57 staff members would stay out, complicating planning

By IAN DUNN  
World staff writer

WENATCHEE — If most parents in the Wenatchee School District had it their way, students would return to classes full-time, a district survey says.

The survey also revealed that 41 teachers said they would take a leave of absence should the school district move to full-time in-person instruction. Overall, 57 staff members said they would take

leave.

Survey results were presented to the Wenatchee School Board Tuesday night as the district and board pondered a possible return to full-time, in-person instruction in the coming weeks.

"I think the staffing issues are what puts us in a jam. If we have a number of folks going on a leave of absence, we don't have an influx of teachers moving to the Wenatchee area," said Board member Michele Sandberg. "That is the

limiting factor here. How do we have the staffing to teach our kids?"

If that many certified staff members went out on leave, it would have a significant impact on the organization, Superintendent Paul Gordon said. But full-time school could still happen, he said.

"It would be backfilled with different individuals filling different roles within

our organization, from admin to many other job responsibilities," Gordon said. "My purpose in presenting this to the board is so the board is wide-eyed to the possibilities as we go down this road."

A return to full-time in-person learning should work for transportation, he said, but daily staffing will determine if students arrive on time.

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Nutritional Services can feed the students, but it will take a minimum of eight additional staff to make it happen daily, Gordon said.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has updated its social distancing guidance to 3-feet. Gordon said if the state Department of Health aligns with CDC, the Wenatchee School District could return to full-time learning.

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### COVID-19

## Wenatchee site passes 31,000 vaccinations

By OSCAR RODRIGUEZ  
World staff writer

WENATCHEE — More than 31,000 COVID-19 vaccinations have been administered at the Town Toyota Center mass vaccination site as of last week, while COVID-19 cases have increased.

The COVID-19 rate, taken over 14 days, has risen to 176.6 per 100,000 from 117.7 around two weeks ago. People may have seen that cases were going down and relaxed masking and social distancing, said Luke Davies, health administrator for the Chelan-Douglas Health District.

The COVID-19 B.1.1.7 variant

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## U.S. vaccine hesitancy could mean 4.6M more cases

By KATIA DMITRIEVA  
Bloomberg News

The U.S. could experience a "perfect storm" for a jump in COVID-19 cases this year if Americans remain unvaccinated while increasing social activity, according to the Penn Wharton Budget Model.

An estimated one-quarter of Americans will opt out of coronavirus vaccinations this year, the nonpartisan research organization said in a report. If activities involving personal contact surpass 70% of pre-pandemic levels, an additional 4.6 million people could catch the virus this year.

"If all eligible US residents are vaccinated in 2021, we project that the pandemic will effectively be over by the fall," researchers Alex Arnon and John Ricco wrote in the report. "Differences in the vaccine take-up rate lead to large differences in the state of the economy at the end of 2021."

Universal vaccination would mean 8.3 million fewer virus cases this year and would trigger an economic boom, according to the projections, with fourth-quarter GDP growth 2 percentage points faster and an extra 2.6 million jobs created by December.

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## A BIG A SMALL BALL WORKOUT



World photos/Don Seabrook

Kevin Strickland, Wenatchee, punches at a Reflex Ball while working out Tuesday at Eastmont Community Park. He says his daily workout has improved his health to "the best it's ever been." **BELOW:** Strickland looks like a man dancing by himself.

## Kicking, punching and twisting his way to fitness

By DON SEABROOK  
World photo editor

EAST WENATCHEE — It's as simple as a ball, an elastic string and a headband, but for Kevin Strickland, 52, of Wenatchee, it's a passion that has helped him become as healthy as he's ever been.

If not for the equipment, it would look like Strickland is dancing at the Eastmont Community Park as he kicks, punches, bends and twists. At closer look, a small, lightweight ball is responsible for every move.

"It all started out with just trying to hit the ball," Strickland said of his moves. "It's so random it's a little chaotic."

As he practiced, he noticed he began anticipating where the ball would go when he hit it with his hands, his elbows, head and feet. He made up moves and named the moves. "Stiletto," "Switch Blade," "Worm hole," are just a few.

Strickland has been working with the Reflex Ball for almost a year. He said it was invented years ago as a



World photo/Don Seabrook

training tool for boxers. He was a boxer in Yakima 32 years ago in his early 20's but he said he got started late in the sport and had to get out.

A father of four, he said he has struggled with his health. A heart attack when he was 38 set him back.

With the daily, one-hour workout he maintains with the ball, he is enjoying being fit.

"It's become a passion for me," he said. "I meditate with it. I escape — I don't think about anything else. I'm healthier now than ever."

With ear buds in his ears, visitors need to be in the line of sight to get his attention. He listens to hard core heavy metal music.

"I love the rhythm," he said. He likes the attention he

garners from other people at the park. He thinks it is great that he is setting an example of someone doing something good — exercising. As for his own children, he said they love that he is doing it, but will stay on the sidelines and watch for now.

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## 'Rescue' fund plans in the works

Chelan County focusing on budget holes, ag and economic recovery

By TONY BUHR  
World staff writer

NCW — Local governments are looking at budgets, businesses and bouncing back from the pandemic in the funding they'll receive from the American Rescue Plan.

The \$2 trillion plan that became law on March 11 will provide billions of dollars to state, county and municipal governments, according to Congressional documents. But a lot of things remain unknown about how much funding cities and counties will receive and what the parameters of the funding will ultimately look like.

According to sources from the offices of U.S. Reps. Kim Schrier, D-Sammamish, and Dan Newhouse, R-Sunnyside, local agencies are estimated to receive the following funding amounts:

- ◆ Chelan County — \$14.97 million
- ◆ Douglas County — \$8.42 million
- ◆ Grant County — \$18.95 million
- ◆ Okanogan — \$8.19 million
- ◆ Wenatchee — \$5.92 million
- ◆ East Wenatchee — \$3.56 million

The U.S. Department of the Treasury is still finalizing the details and payment amounts from the bill, according to local officials.

The American Rescue Plan has a couple of advantages over the CARES Act funding that agencies received in June 2020, Chelan County Commissioner Bob Bugert said. For one thing counties and cities will get the funding directly from the federal government.

The CARES Act had each state divvy out funding to local agencies and some counties in Washington received more funding per capita.

Also, counties and cities may have more latitude with what they do with the rescue plan funding compared to the CARES Act, Bugert said.

"A lot of funding last time, it had a very specific deadline as far as when the money was to be spent," Bugert said. "Which just caused some challenges for us."

Bugert said Chelan County plans to spend its funding in three ways:

- ◆ To shore up budgetary holes caused by COVID-19
- ◆ To provide grants to

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Bob Bugert  
Chelan County commissioner