

While Oregonians are reeling from the newest edicts from our Governor that have dared to invade our private homes, residents of Nestucca Valley School District are dealing with their own challenges from an unelected ruler, our school superintendent.

Misty Wharton has a history of pushing her agenda, from comprehensive “health” curriculum to extensive building programs that are questionable in their necessity and have significantly changed and grown since their original presentation to the public. The current building project passed with a bond by less than 100 votes in our area, and now includes the local preschool. In fact, the school is currently working on a third additional purchase of property to finish spending our \$29 million dollars.

During the COVID-19 crisis she has become even more aggressive, denying the public access to a board meeting, refusing to open the schools, temporarily closing down the school to employee access due to a COVID-19 case of an employee’s spouse, and the list could go on. All the while denying our students the education the community pays the school to deliver. This is not a criticism of the efforts of our committed, local teachers, but a reality of the online schooling platforms. In some areas, students do not have access to the internet, as promised by our superintendent.

On Nov. 16, 2020, Superintendent Wharton decided to follow the example of Governor Brown and made a mask mandate on private property of patrons. She is requiring all those receiving food services from the school (via bussing the food supplies to the private homes) to wear masks while receiving the food outside! If patrons do not wear masks outside their own homes to receive food deliveries the bus drivers have been ordered to not stop. Often, these patrons are the students, children. All this during the Governor’s newest “freeze” on our largely tourist dependent economy putting more families at risk during this holiday season. Not to mention food services are largely federally financed. There is no federal mask mandate.

I had made a request to our school board to rescind this edict from the superintendent, but they have refused to curtail the mandate, as per the usual practice with the current superintendent.

The excuses given for this newest edict from our superintendent have been due to supposed “positive” cases, which the school does not have to prove due to privacy laws, and fear of the employees that someone outside not wearing a mask could pass the dreaded virus. Yet the science shows the virus is one-third the size of the holes in surgical masks and there is no documented case (that I am aware of at this time) of a student passing COVID-19 to school personnel in our country.

The food services administrator, the superintendent’s cousin, insists that the state is requiring this newest mandate. Yet, Nestucca Valley School District is largely funded from local timber sales.

It is past time for the residents of our county and state to call the bluff of these petty tyrants. The school superintendent does not have the power to enforce unconstitutional mask mandates on private property. School board members swore an oath to uphold the United States Constitution, not the random edicts of our governor. If mandates from local or state officials compel individuals to act immorally (denying food to underprivileged children) then they should not be obeyed. These illegal mandates will not stop until We the People quit obeying them.

-April Bailey, Cloverdale