

LAKE TAHOE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

"Creating Learning Opportunities For Every Child To Achieve Success"



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STRONG SUPPORT FOR POTENTIAL BOND FOR SCHOOL SAFETY REPAIRS/UPGRADES, AND BETTER TECHNOLOGY

BOND WOULD SECURE MORE THAN \$11 MILLION IN STATE MATCHING FUNDS FOR LAKE TAHOE
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE, CA – January 29, 2008

Lake Tahoe residents feel strongly about continuing to improve South Lake Tahoe's local schools to provide the excellent schools and classrooms necessary to maintain student enrollment and retain excellent teachers.

According to a recent public opinion research survey conducted in January by the Center for Community Opinion, 61% of voters would support a bond measure for Tahoe schools outright, with support increasing to 68% after receiving additional information about potential school projects.

Based on interviews with 403 residents across the community, the survey found that voters considered student safety, repairs and upgrades of existing schools, and improving computer technology and libraries to be top priorities for potential bond funds. Additionally, 80% of respondents said bond funds should be used to replace leaking roofs and ruined floors, as well as removing exposed asbestos in the Blue and Gold Gyms and locker rooms at the high school to provide students a safe, healthy recreation facility.

“Our residents understand how important our schools are to this community. Our schools are not only a place to learn, but also a place where all students should be able to reach their fullest potential. Our community values career technical programs, technology labs, physical education, athletic and performing arts facilities and programs as essential parts of a well-rounded education experience. Further, these types of programs and facilities keep students learning -- and away from gangs and drugs,” said Superintendent Dr. Jim Tarwater. “If we want to maintain a high level of excellence, we must invest in our schools and our students and take advantage of the millions of dollars in State matching funds available to our local community, before it’s given away to other districts.”

Projects that community respondents ranked as priorities included replacing old portables that have been used longer than recommended by state guidelines and building a new career and technical education classrooms at the high school for a Construction and Automotive Career Academy. If local voters approve a bond in the coming weeks, the state will provide \$5 million in matching funds to replace portables with new, permanent classrooms and \$6 million to build the Career Academy.

“We worked quickly to ensure that our schools have an opportunity to receive state matching funds for these critical projects. However, \$11 million in state matching funds are contingent upon our voters approving this bond in the coming weeks – otherwise, these matching funds will be awarded to other school districts” said High School Principal Ivone Larson.

In addition to the community survey, local educators have been meeting with parents, teachers, community leaders and staff to get their input on project priorities. The Board will consider placing a School Bond on the ballot this coming June. If approved by voters, construction on new school projects could begin as early as August. “Any plan we propose will include independent fiscal audits, citizens’ oversight, and other fiscal accountability safeguards,” said Dr. Tarwater.

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