

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE
AUGUST 2009



By Dr. James R. Tarwater
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The line between failure and success is so fine that we are often on the line and do not know it!

Over the past three years, the staff at Lake Tahoe Unified School District has been refining teaching strategies to improve students' mastery of State standards. The 2008/09 State test scores reflect a dramatic improvement for all schools in the District as a result of these efforts. Nevertheless, we continue to pursue that fine line to make sure that ALL students can realize success.

Our theme for the 2009/10 school year is "**202 The Extra Degree**"

At sea level water boils at 212 degrees Fahrenheit; at Lake Tahoe water boils at 202 degrees Fahrenheit.

At 201° water is hot at Lake Tahoe; at 202° water boils at Lake Tahoe.

With boiling water, comes steam, and steam can power a locomotive!

Seemingly small things can make a tremendous difference if we push ourselves to make the extra effort, to give the extra degree..... and then some, in every task we undertake. Raising the temperature of water by one extra degree means the difference between something that is simply very hot and something powerful! We hope that the **202** expectation will encourage students and staff to commit and to focus on crossing the fine line that divides success and failure. "**202 The Extra Degree**" is not only a message of action -- it's a message of persistence and positive attitude.

The School Board has practiced the "**202 The Extra Degree**" by making a commitment to maintain Class Size Reduction (K-3), Elementary PE, and Music, during this unprecedented times when school funding is a constant target for budget cuts.

There are a number of simple and surprising things that our staff and families can do to go that extra degree.....and then some!

- **Attend School On Time, Every Day! "202 The Extra Degree"**
The District receives State funding of approximately \$29 per day, per student. So, every day a child is absent means \$29 less in funding. We know it's hard to schedule some appointments outside of the school day, but we're asking that parents make every effort to send their children to school at least for part of the day and schedule afternoon appointments. During the upcoming flu season, we're reminding children to wash their hands more frequently, cover their mouths and nose when they cough or sneeze, be aware of flu symptoms, and to stay home when sick. Simple precautions like these can save thousands of dollars that can be put to better use at our schools.

- **Communication! "202 The Extra Degree"**

We continue to provide our educational community with accurate and timely information. District staff will always do its best to present clear and concise messages regarding the issues that are most crucial. In an effort to conserve supplies, more and more communications will be via phone (Connect Ed) or via parent email. Parents can help by keeping their contact information current and communicating with teachers. Participation in school activities such as PTA, School Site Council, parent nights, concerts, etc. is always welcome. Community members are also invited to stay current on LTUSD news and events by joining the Community Newsgroup -- email your name and email address to info@ltusd.org to receive regular updates.

- **Construction! "202 the Extra Degree"and then some!**

We'd like to reiterate our heartfelt thanks to the community for passing Measure G which is allowing us to begin the first phase of construction at South Tahoe High School. We are replacing old portables with a brand new two-story, fifteen-room structure, and another new building which will house the auto/transportation, construction, and architectural programs. These projects will be completed in the Summer of 2010 when we will start Phase II -- modernizing the Theatre, and constructing the Arts, Media, and Entertainment wing.

- **Protect Your Investment!**

Our schools are built and maintained through investments by local taxpayers. If you live near a school and you see vandalism, burglary, or another type of crime in progress, call the South Lake Tahoe Police Department at 530-542-6100. You can also anonymously call the We Tip Hotline toll free at 1-800-78-CRIME (wetip.com). We Tip provides rewards for information leading to an arrest.

- **Donate Everyday Items!**

Sometimes it's the smallest things that our schools really need - things like Kleenex, copy paper, pens, pencils, printer ink or printer cartridges - that make a difference. The schools will be contacting parents and community members with a list of general supplies that will help. The District's budget has been cut \$3.3 million for the 08/09 and 09/10 school years. In an effort to retain quality programs and staff members, which are the core of our educational system, instructional supply budgets took a big hit.

Involvement and reminders drive continual awareness.....and with awareness comes responsibility and action. Let the number **202** serve as your constant reminder. It's a new way of thinking -- a new way of acting. Show kindness to others during these difficult times. Be proud of your student's achievements as they prepare for the future. Give the Extra Degree of effort at every opportunity.

We will continue to turn up the heat.....continue to pursue the fine line between failure and success.....continue to give one degree of extra degree of extra effort at every opportunity.....what about you?



Dr. James R. Tarwater, Superintendent
Lake Tahoe Unified School District