

STHS to initiate sports medicine discipline

By Kathryn Reed



To complement the world-class athletes and medical professionals who live and work in South Lake Tahoe, a sports medicine training facility is going to be built at South Tahoe High School.

Word came last week that Lake Tahoe Unified School District has locked in a nearly \$2.5 million grant to build the facility. (The most that could be requested was \$3 million.) Matching funds are needed. Those will come from the \$64.5 million bond (aka Measure G) approved by voters in 2008.

This brings the total in matching funds from the state to \$31 million.

Of the 220 grants submitted to the state to share the \$250 million, LTUSD had the fourth highest score.

It will be at least next year before the actual check arrives, but notification means the district and its architects can go ahead with drawings.

Superintendent James Tarwater acknowledged at Tuesday's board meeting the work of Angela Swanson and Ivone Larson to make this a reality.

"Angela always smells out a nickel," Tarwater said of the former board member who is a consultant for LPA architects.

Larson is four-for-four in writing career technical education grants.

“No longer is there a separation of vocational education and college prep. We are putting them together and (students) are getting hands-on experience,” Larson said when interviewed at her office Wednesday afternoon. “Basically, everyone here will be in a career pathway.”

The STHS principal said students and the community have expressed interest in sports medicine disciplines.

In many ways, the new facility will function as the lab component for existing classes offered at the high school. Sports medicine will be incorporated into freshmen seminar, health science, anatomy, physiology and biology, as well as the dental program.

Students will learn about being a physical therapist, could have enough education to be a certified personal trainer upon graduation, or be on their way to pre-med.

“We are redesigning what we are doing for the future of kids,” Larson said. “We are placing kids in jobs right out of high school.”

This type of secondary education could also get them into a prestigious four-year university.

A remodel of the gym was already written into the bond language, so the sports med facility is being incorporated into that along with a separate 7,800-square-foot building adjacent to the Blue and Gold gyms.

Although definitive architectural drawings have not been done, in the grant application is a description of what the district would like to build. The building is likely to include a classroom, physical therapy-conditioning area that will have devices similar to a PT office, whirlpool therapy, therapy

pool, rooms with massage tables, a hand therapy room and all the appropriate equipment.

“There’s a lot of expertise in our community with exercise and sports medicine that can be tapped into,” said Steve Bannar, one of the orthopedic surgeons from Barton Health who gave input before the grant was written. “I think there is a lot of potential.”

Bannar would like for it to become a training facility that athletes throughout the world would use. He touched on how the 1968 Olympic track athletes trained on the South Shore because of the elevation in preparation for the Mexico City Olympics.

Publisher’s note: *On Friday, read about the options LTUSD has when it comes to the next round of bond sales regarding Measure G.*