

Remodel, additions create sophisticated STMS campus

By Kathryn Reed

Summer is over – at least for students in Lake Tahoe Unified School District. Today is the first day of the 2012-13 school year.

Three days ago, the principal, teachers and students were giddy. They were ready for classes to begin. A buzz permeated South Tahoe Middle School. It had everything to do with the remodel of the campus and the new two-story Mountain Vista building being complete.

Well, it wasn't really completed. Workers were still caulking, painting and planting. All was to be ready for today's first bell.



Changes at South Tahoe Middle School are dramatic.
Photos/Kathryn Reed

But the views, well, they weren't there before. Freel Peak, Jobs, Jobs Sister – are visible from the second floor. Looking down is what is now called Timberwolf Plaza. This is where

students may eat on the grass or one of the several tables.

“It feels like a campus finally,” Principal Beth Delacour said as she proudly walked the halls and out to what she calls the “back yard”.

She knew students by name, and those who were incoming were introduced by their siblings or parents. Kids were smiling as they perused the new facility in search of their classrooms and teachers.

J.J. Clause and Linda Kurek, the two music instructors, were all smiles. They can't believe how the band room has been transformed.

“We won't get slivers off the storage cabinets. There is room for all the kids' and school's instruments. We have windows that open and are not painted black,” Clause said.

Clause and Kurek had been talking about what they wanted the band room to be like for the last dozen years. They had even drawn up the plans – most of which became a reality.

Not only does it feel like a campus, but a high school campus.

Technological upgrades in classrooms mean circuit breakers should no longer be tripped when teachers try to plug more than two things in at once. Some of the classrooms were so old they only had two electrical outlets.

The revamping of STMS, which included the removal of 10 portables that became classrooms in the two-story building, was paid for by the voter-approved \$64.5 million Measure G facilities bond. Matching grants brought the total the district will spend to \$98 million.

New flooring, paint and some new windows are touches throughout the school.

Also new this school year is the student union at South Tahoe

High School. It finally allows the kids to eat indoors in one place. This is a joint use facility with South Lake Tahoe, so it is really a community building.

Officials envision being able to rent out that center to organizations, especially during the summer when school is not in session.

Plenty of dust is flying at the high school, as workers build the sports medicine complex. Also under way are the improvements to Bijou Community School.

Next year the magnet school in Meyers will receive some upgrades. When those are done, all the money will have been spent.

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