

Meyers youngsters learn to snowboard – indoors

By Kathryn Reed

MEYERS – Dry slopes work for British Olympians to learn to ski and ride, so why not indoor snowboarding for Meyers kids?

That is exactly what took place two days last week at the magnet school. Four stations were set up in the multipurpose room, which doubles as the gymnasium, so K-2 students could get a feel for what it is like to be on a snowboard.

And while this isn't how hometown gold medalist Jamie Anderson learned, the youngsters were thrilled to be possibly following in her footsteps. One kindergartner said he had been snowboarding his whole life.

With how well some of the students were able to balance, it was obvious they had either been on a board before or they are naturally gifted.

A handful of Sierra-at-Tahoe employees brought the Burton-certified learning tools to the school as an introduction to snowboarding. But it's more than that for teacher Kristi Jouett. What was being taught also fits into the state standards for physical education.

"It teaches them balance, changing directions, and moving through space without crashing into each other," Jouett said of the interactive Burton program. These are all things she teaches in PE.

Sierra would like this to become a permanent component of Lake Tahoe Unified School District's physical education curriculum at all of its elementary schools. The tools Sierra uses are supplied by Burton. All the equipment is scaled to this age

group.

One station had kids on a mini plastic snowboard that was then pulled by one or two classmates who held a handle that looks like it would be used for water skiing.



Kindergartner Avalon Newberry is pulled on a snowboard by classmates. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Avalon Newberry was “riding” through the gym as one of the instructors told her: hands out, stay low and spirits high.

A sense of seriousness then came over her, followed by a big smile as she did what she was told to do.

Those on the stage were on a springy mini snowboard that allowed them to get the feel of rocking back and forth as well as side to side. Once the balance part was mastered then they tossed a ball to each to further test their skills.

Like what the pros have been showing off for the judges, the youngsters were grabbing the tail for points.

At the end of the special PE class they were all awarded “Olympic” medals.