

TVES to be home of transitional K program

By Kathryn Reed

After much discontent from parents, Lake Tahoe Unified School District listened. It was decided Tuesday that Tahoe Valley Elementary School would house the transitional kindergarten program starting in the fall.

At the March 29 school board meeting staff had proposed the program be at the defunct Al Tahoe school site.

Having it at Tahoe Valley means the little ones will be able take part in schoolwide events like Tahoe Arts Project assemblies. They will also be part of a real school.

In addition, Principal Christina Grubbs has a background in early childhood education.

LTUSD has had what it calls preppie K for a number of years. Transitional kindergarten, or TK, is similar. It's just that now the state is requiring as of this fall for districts to have TK.

While all the questions and concerns of parents have yet to be addressed, some fears were dispelled at the April 22 meeting. Of the five people who spoke that night, four were parents who will have kids in the program next school year.

Busing, hours of the program, how the kids will be divided and what happens after school were all topics that were brought up.

Class will start at 9:10am, just like the rest of the school. This makes it less stressful for everyone. The exact end time has not been determined, but 1:30pm is likely.

Grubbs said going longer is not beneficial for most kids. For some kids, it's naptime after lunch.

"If you push them through the sleep time, in some cases their learning decreases by 70 percent," Grubbs told the board.

These kids will have their own bus to and from school so they are not mixed with big kids.

"We don't let a kid off the bus unless there is an adult to greet them," Grubbs said. No adult, then the child is brought back to the school.

Students can even be dropped off at day care centers.

Even though they may be going to one of the other three elementary schools for regular K the following year, all the TK students will be mixed together.

"We felt it better to mix the kids. A heterogeneous grouping is vital. It's vital for the social and emotional piece," Grubbs said.

Tarwater said after school programs can be worked out in the future.

There will be no more than 24 students in a class. This is so the district does not jeopardize its \$1.2 million class-size reduction subsidy from the state.

Tahoe Valley will receive a half million dollar sprucing up this summer. This will include new playground equipment, additional equipment moving over from Bijou Community School, paint, carpet, changes to the entrance and improved drop-off lanes.