

Opinion: A voice for STHS students

Publisher's note: *The following was read at the March 13 Lake Tahoe Unified School District board meeting and is published with permission.*

By Shelby Lyon

In light of the shooting last month in Florida, and recent discussions occurring around school concerning new safety policies, students would like to voice their concerns. Specifically, discussion about putting a fence around the school has been a topic of controversy.

In most school shootings, the threat comes from someone inside, not outside, and if the threat were to come from outside, many students feel that a fence would not keep them safe, but could easily be broken, climbed, or shot through, making our campus just as vulnerable as before. In addition, a fence would prevent students from being able to escape a shooter on campus. We would, as students, be more trapped than we already are.

However, we do feel that because of the world we live in today where gun violence has become so common, that safety precautions are necessary. Furthermore, we believe that money could be spent on more productive precautions than a fence. For example, bulletproof doors/windows, more security guards, bringing another social worker on campus, or even fixing the bathrooms in the science hall so that doors can be locked during class time.

But more than this, students have overwhelmingly agreed that the best way to make our school campus safer is by creating an environment where no student or staff member ever feels that they are so alone and uncared about to the point in which they

can become capable of bringing a weapon on campus and harming someone. The district and our community should be focusing our time, energy, and money into building bridges, not fences. And thus getting rid of the threat of an inside shooter altogether through a school community that is inclusive, accepting, and reaches out to students or staff at risk.

We should be training our teachers to stop bullying in their classrooms. We should be teaching our students how to be empathetic and about the importance of opening the door to relationships, healing, and help.

In closing, we feel that the decision to build a fence is not the best path to take. On behalf of the student body at South Tahoe, I'd like to ask for the vote to be postponed so that our concerns can be heard. We greatly appreciate all that you have done to take our safety so seriously and are thankful that you all are trying to move quickly to make our campus safer; but we feel like putting up fences is not the solution, and we feel that this decision might need more thought.

Thank you for taking our concerns seriously.

Shelby Lyon is the South Tahoe High School student body president and student representative on the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board.