



Lake Tahoe Unified School District Measure "G" FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



On June 24, 2008 the Lake Tahoe Unified School District Board of Education approved a resolution to place a \$64.5 million bond measure on the November 4, 2008 ballot.

If approved by South Lake Tahoe voters, the bond will finance new construction, modernization, and renovation projects at all six of the District's schools – Bijou Community School, Lake Tahoe Environmental Science Magnet School, Sierra House Elementary School, Tahoe Valley Elementary School, South Tahoe Middle School, and South Tahoe High School.

Thanks to two successful bond efforts in 1992 and 1999, some areas of our schools are now in great shape to continue to provide quality education to our children. But not all areas were fully renovated, particularly at the High School, and need safety and structural improvements.

The High School is in need of our help because the effects of time, weather, and over a thousand students per day have taken their toll on the facility. In addition, our facilities are becoming more critical every year to the community as groups use the buildings and grounds on nights and weekends. Groups such as the Lake Tahoe Community College, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, AYSO, Pop Warner, and many others depend on the district to provide safe indoor and outdoor facilities in good condition for their use. We're a small town, so these facilities are sometimes our only places to meet for recreation, education, outreach, and in emergencies.

The objective of Measure G is to build the facilities and programs to meet 21st century education standards and design so that our students can achieve and ultimately succeed in the global, regional, and local economies.

The following are frequently asked questions and answers about the ballot measure:

1) Q. How was it determined that the Lake Tahoe Unified School District's schools needed major renovation and replacement construction?

A. In 2007, an architectural firm was hired to help the Lake Tahoe Unified School District develop a school facilities master plan. A District Master Plan Committee was formed in November 2007, consisting of community members, staff, administration and parents. The architects met with staff and students at each school and assessed the needs that the District is facing considering that many school buildings are 35-60 years old. Standards were identified to guide the development of specific recommendations for each school campus, allowing them to comply with state requirements that allow the District to apply for matching state funding to renovate and modernize the school facilities and assure their continued use for the next several decades. The initial cost of identified needs was \$130 million. The District Master Plan Committee pared down those projects to \$87 million, and following an unsuccessful first attempt to pass a bond measure, the Board of Education pared down the projects again to \$64.5 million. Seventy percent of the bond funds will be used for new construction, replacement of portables and expansion of programs that require new facilities. The matching funds from the CTE (Career Technical Education) grants – Transportation/Auto, Construction Trades, and Art, Media and Entertainment Trades -- will provide students with an opportunity to keep pace with other districts in the State that have pursued and obtained these grants.

2) Q. How much is the bond? How much will it increase my property taxes? How many years will I have to pay this tax? Could the District sell more than \$64.5 million in bonds?

A. The District may only issue up to \$64.5 million worth of bonds over a 35-year period. The District cannot sell more than \$64.5 million in bonds. A \$64.5 million bond measure translates to a projected average rate of \$28.70 per year per \$100,000 of assessed property valuation.

Reminder: The assessed value of your home may be substantially less than the appraised or market value of your home. The longer you have owned your home the more likely the assessed value is lower than the appraised value. Your annual property tax bill shows the assessed value of your home.

Assessed value of a home increases for only three reasons (1) the property is sold, then it is reassessed at the market value, (2) an improvement is added, and the homes assessed value increases by the value of the improvement, (3) a year passes and the assessed value increases by the lesser of 2% or the change in the California Consumer Price Index.

Since the average assessed value of homes in the LTUSD is approximately \$188,770, the average homeowner would pay, on the average, an additional \$54.18 per year in property taxes.

To determine the projected average cost of the bond per year for a residential home, use the following formula:

$$\frac{(\text{Assessed Value of Home}) \times (\$28.70)}{\$100,000}$$

For example: $\frac{(\$188,770 \times \$28.70)}{\$100,000}$

= \$54.18

The following chart illustrates examples of the average annual tax rate (and monthly equivalent) based on a range of **assessed** values of homes:

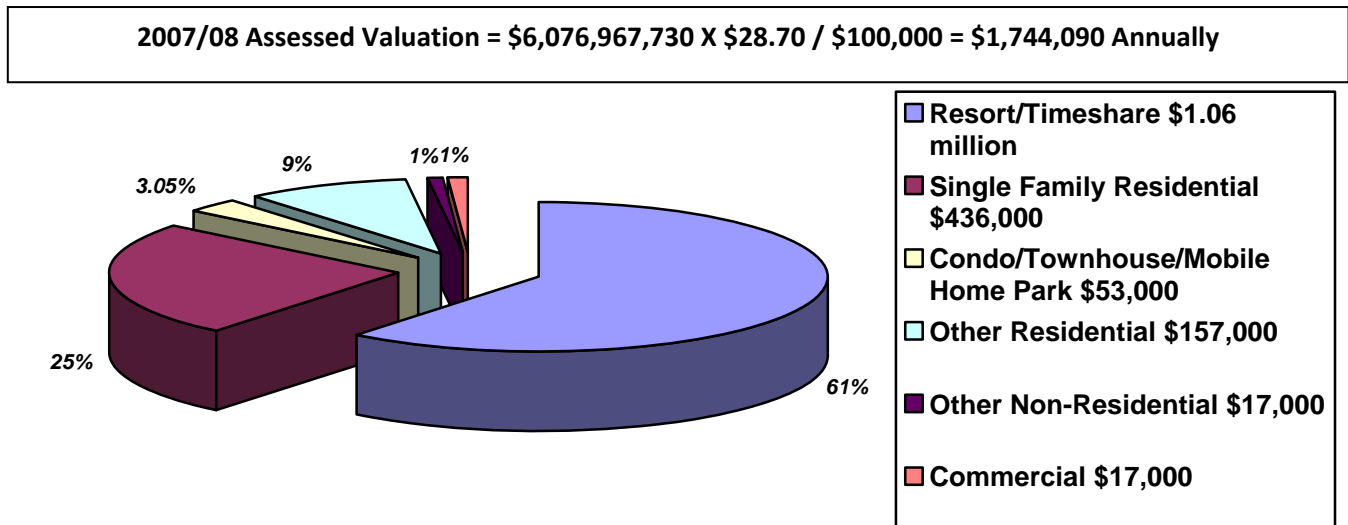
<u>Assessed Value of Home</u>	<u>Projected Average Annual Tax</u>	<u>Monthly Equivalent</u>
\$ 50,000	\$ 14.35	\$ 1.20
\$100,000	\$ 28.70	\$ 2.39
\$200,000	\$ 57.40	\$ 4.78
\$300,000	\$ 89.10	\$ 7.18
\$400,000	\$114.80	\$ 9.57
\$500,000	\$143.50	\$11.96
\$600,000	\$172.20	\$14.35

3) Q. I bought my house in 2004 and the market value has decreased substantially. Why should I be assessed at the inflated value?

The value of property may decline for any number of reasons. California law requires the Assessor to recognize these declines and when appropriate, reflect the decline in the assessed value of the property. Because of the current real estate conditions in El Dorado County, it is quite possible that the value of properties purchased in and after 2004 may be eligible for a reduced assessment (under Proposition 8). Property acquired before 2004 is generally still assessed at less than the current market value. If for any reason, you believe the assessed value of your property is more than the market value, please [click here](#) for an electronic application for review. The [El Dorado County Assessor's Office](#) will review your assessment and you will receive a notification of their determination.

4) Q. Who will pay the bulk of the increased property taxes?

A. The top taxpayers in South Lake Tahoe consist of resort/timeshare, other residential, condo/townhouse/mobile home parks, and other non-residential properties. They make up 75% of the 2007/08 total assessed valuation of approximately \$6 billion. At \$28.70 per \$100,000 of assessed value, 75% of the tax, or \$1.3 million, would be paid by those taxpayers on an annual basis. The other 25% of the tax base consists of single-family residences. The remaining \$436,000 would be paid by those taxpayers, a portion of whom may be second-home owners who do not live here year-round. So, the majority of year-round residents will pay only a very small portion of the tax, while improving their community, creating new jobs, increasing the value of their homes, and attracting visitors and families to the area. It is also interesting to note that 93% of timeshares have assessed values of less than \$25,000. At a tax rate of \$28.70 per \$100,000 of A.V., the average annual timeshare owner's tax increase would be approximately \$3.83.



5) Q. What are the improvements that will be made to the schools?

A. Bond Project List:

- Bijou Elementary School (47-Years-Old) \$6,647,507
 - Construct Six Full-Size Kindergarten Classrooms
 - Improve Library/Media Center to Enhance Access to Technology
 - Upgrade Classroom Technology to Meet Future Instructional Needs
 - Strengthen Roof Structures to Safely Accommodate Snow Loads. From previous bond money, school roofs have already been retrofitted, with the exception of the overhangs, which are proposed under the new bond.

- Lake Tahoe Environmental Science Magnet School (43-Years-Old) \$2,473,437
 - Renovate Existing Classroom Building to Improve Educational Environment
 - Construct Heated Walkways to Increase Student Safety
 - Upgrade Heating, Ventilation, and Lighting Systems for Energy Efficiency and to Reduce Energy Costs

- Sierra House Elementary School (35-Years-Old) \$100,000
 - Upgrade Classroom Technology to Meet Future Instructional Needs

➤ <u>Tahoe Valley Elementary School (48-Years-Old)</u>	<u>\$728,305</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade Classroom Technology to Meet Future Instructional Needs • Strengthen Roof Structures to Safely Accommodate Snow Loads • Construct Heated Walkways to Increase Student Safety 	
➤ <u>South Tahoe Middle School (59-Years-Old)</u>	<u>\$9,240,228</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace Portable Classrooms with a New Permanent Sixth Grade Building • Renovate Existing Classrooms not Repaired During Previous Bond Program • Convert Outdated Shop Rooms to Facilitate Expanded Music Programs • Upgrade Classroom Technology to Meet Future Instructional Needs • Construct Heated Walkways to Increase Student Safety • Upgrade Heating, Ventilation, and Lighting Systems for Energy Efficiency and to Reduce Energy Costs • Replace ten portable classrooms with eight new permanent construction portables. • Ninety of the schools permanent buildings have been retrofitted and modernized through previous bond, except for Wing D, which consists of ten classrooms and three music rooms. These would be modernized under the new bond. 	
➤ <u>South Tahoe High School (38-Years-Old)</u>	<u>\$55,656,417</u>
Less State Funding Match	(\$15,400,000)
	<u>\$40,256,417</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand Educational and Career Opportunities • Construct New Transportation and Construction Academy • Construct Media and Design Arts Academy • Renovate Performing Arts to become Production and Managerial Arts Academy • Replace Portable Classrooms with a New Permanent Classroom Building • Convert Outdated Shop Rooms to a New Student Union • Repair/Upgrade Existing Physical Education Facilities, Blue and Gold Gyms • Reconfigure Auto/Bus Parking and Drop-Off Areas to Increase Safety • Upgrade Classroom Technology to Meet Future Instructional Needs • Renovate Exterior Courtyards and Construct Heated Walkways to Increase Student Safety • Upgrade Heating, Ventilation, and Lighting Systems for Energy Efficiency and to Reduce Energy Costs <p>(Fifty percent of the buildings have been modernized under previous bonds.)</p>	
➤ <u>Transportation & Warehouse Facility</u>	<u>\$2,112,384</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand Transportation Facility to Accommodate New Fuel Efficient Vehicles • Repair/Upgrade Existing Building for Energy Efficiency and to Reduce Energy Costs 	
<u>Program Contingency (4.5%)</u>	<u>\$2,941,722</u>
Measure 'G' Total	\$64,500,000

6) Q. Why do you need to replace portable classrooms with permanent structures?

A . The District has 90 portable classrooms throughout the campuses, of which 42 are fifteen years or older. The other 48 are 10-15-years-old. Many of these portables are dilapidated and

need to be replaced with permanent classrooms or eliminated completely. The State of California gives a lifespan of 15 years for portable classrooms in their inventory. Portables were never intended to be permanent solutions for facility needs.

7) Q. Why weren't the buildings kept in better shape? Isn't this the responsibility of the school District?

A. All of the schools have been maintained, but ongoing maintenance such as repairs made to roofs, walls, floors and ceilings does not address the major infrastructure needs of these aging schools. As a general rule, schools need major repairs and modernization every 20 to 30 years. Most of the District school facilities are over 40 years old. The school facilities that haven't been modernized have antiquated and inadequate heating, lighting and plumbing systems. A new bond will allow the District to bring all schools up to current ADA codes.

8) Q. What would the passage of Measure G mean to our community?

A. Public schools are a tremendous asset to the community since they serve to educate our youth, provide meeting and recreational facilities to the residents, visitors, and second-home owners, and are directly related to the image of our community. Resulting enhancements of school facilities reflects positively on the neighborhood and community. We can expect the creation of several construction-related jobs with this bond measure.

9) Q. Why does the school district need a bond measure when enrollment has been declining?

A. It is true that enrollment has declined by about 1500 students over the past ten years and the District closed two schools in 2003. However, the decline has steadied and, through the creation of new programs in the district, such as the Environmental Science Magnet School, the Independent Learning Academy, and the Two-Way Immersion Program, students and families are being attracted from local private schools, home schools, and Nevada. In addition to its Preppie Kindergarten Program, the District is in the process of bringing even more pre-school opportunities to the community. The re-instatement of Class Size Reduction (20:1) in grades K-3 and 9th Grade in 2004, with the help of the Lake Tahoe Educational Foundation, also expanded the need for classrooms.

10) Q. What can the District do with the bond money?

A. Under State law, bond money can **only** be used to acquire, construct, or improve school facilities. Bond funds are kept and monitored by the County Treasurer to ensure proper fund allocation. **The payment of teacher and administrator salaries or operating expenses unrelated to bond measure projects is strictly prohibited.**

11) Q. When was the last bond approved for the schools? How much was it and what projects did it pay for?

A. In 1992 and again in 1999, the District proposed bond measures that were approved by the voters. The following is a brief summary of the District's prior record of uses of voter-approved bond funds:

1992 Measure A (\$7 million):

1. South Tahoe Middle School: Multi-purpose room construction
2. South Tahoe High School: New science & technology, library and old science wing modernization.
3. All sites: Portable classrooms, structural upgrades, mandated asbestos abatement, upgrading drainage to meet Tahoe Regional Planning Agency requirements.

1999 Measure C (\$17 million):

1. South Tahoe Middle School: Science wing and student/public entry construction.
2. South Tahoe High School: Mt. Tallac continuation school construction, modernization of A, B and C Wings, modernization of Administrative building, and replacement of exterior walkways.
3. All sites: Electrical wiring upgrades, especially for computer uses; mechanical, lighting, and energy conservation modernization; seismic (earthquake) retrofits; restroom and ADA access modernization.

The District qualified for, and received, a total of \$23 million in California State matching funds to augment locally obtained funds for the above projects. District personnel are experienced in directing construction projects and in obtaining state assistance funds.

12) Q. Why were the 1992 Bond and the 1999 Bond only for \$7 and \$17 million respectively and Measure G is \$64.5 million?

A. Measure G will provide the \$30 million in local funds needed in order to obtain an additional \$15.4 million in state funds to construct a vocational school and a two-story, permanent structure to replace several portable structures that have reached the end of their economic lives. The other \$34.5 million, will update older facilities at the middle and elementary schools and the 55-year-old bus garage. The 1992 and 1999 bonds were used to construct the multi-purpose room at the middle school, a new science and technology wing and library at the high school, a science wing at the middle school, a small school-within-a-school (Mt. Tallac) at the high school and other many structural modernizations at each of the schools. In 1999, the construction costs per square foot were \$158. Today, construction costs hover around the \$450 per square foot mark. Measure G continues the District's commitment to provide quality programs in quality schools. Repairs and patchwork can only go so far before replacements are needed. A systematic approach to replacing facilities when needed is prudent and fiscally responsible in light of ever-increasing construction costs.

13) Q. How much is the state contributing to this project?

A. LTUSD is proactive in securing federal and state grants for eligible construction projects when possible. Obtaining further State matching funds for eligible school modernization projects requires local matching funds. The District is eligible for \$15.4 million from the state through Prop. 1D once the bond is passed.

14) Q. What exactly is Proposition 1D?

A. Prop 1D was passed by voters in California in November 2006 to fund school construction needs in California through a variety of programs. Lake Tahoe USD qualifies for funding in only a few of these programs, one of which is the Career Technical Education (CTE) program, the purpose of which is to improve and expand existing CTE programs. \$500,000,000 became available for CTE and it allowed eligible schools to apply for new construction funding,

remodeling and reconfiguration funding and/or funding for CTE equipment. The program called for a significant planning effort to be made by the school to address all the necessary components for the application. South Tahoe High School applied for, and was granted three grants to construct facilities for Construction/Transportation/Arts and Media Design, totaling \$10.4 million. However, that amount must be matched dollar-for-dollar by the District.

15) Q. What about the other \$5 million that requires matching funds?

A. In addition to the CTE grants, the District applied and was granted another \$5 million under the Overcrowded Relief Grant (ORG) to eliminate old portables and replace with fifteen permanent, energy-efficient, two-story classrooms for the Math Department, AVID, Career Education, and AP Environmental Science. This, too, requires a match or it goes to other districts that can provide a match.

16) Q. We heard that Measure A was the District's *one* chance to benefit from matching funds and if it didn't pass the money was gone. Now there is a second chance? How?

The District submitted applications and has been awarded grants under Prop. 1D totaling \$15.4 million. In order to cash in on those matching funds, architectural designs must be approved by the Department of State Architects (DSA). The deadline for submitting those plans is September 2008 for approval in the Spring of 2009. The Board placed Measure A on the ballot in June rather than November so that the bond money could be used to develop architectural design work for the CTE buildings and the 15 classrooms from the ORG grant. Since Measure A didn't pass, the District has opted to pay for the architectural design work up front, using reserves for special projects, in the hope that Measure G will pass in November. There is still only *one* chance to retain the matching funds, it's just a matter of meeting State deadlines and requirements of the grants.

17) Q. Will utility conservation measures be included in the bond planning? How much money could be saved in utility costs if modernization was completed?

A. An energy conservation program is practiced by the District and may contribute to a 12-15 % reduction in energy consumption. The District currently operates a central direct digital control system of the HVAC systems with the exception of non-modernized areas of the schools.

18) Q. Doesn't the school get money from the state to pay for the upkeep of the school buildings?

A. All funds for building maintenance comes from the general fund except for the Deferred Maintenance funding program. The District is required to match \$180,000 annual funding for deferred maintenance, for a total of \$360,000. This money is used for repairs such as re-roofing, painting, floor coverings and paving. The federal government does not provide funds for maintenance or modernization of the District's facilities.

19) Q. Does the California Lottery money pay for facility improvements?

A. Lottery money is restricted to funding day-to-day operations and contributes less than one percent of the District's annual budget at approximately \$152 per pupil. These funds are used to purchase instructional materials.

20) Q. Are all of the recommended projects really necessary? Could money be saved by only attending to the most pressing problems?

A. All of the recommended projects must be addressed in order to provide an effective learning and working environment. The District is committed to establishing District-wide safety and accessibility standards and complying with current state and local building codes. The development of the Facilities Master Plan included a cost analysis that determined that with a program of this magnitude, it is much more cost effective and efficient to do the work all at once rather than piecemeal.

21) Q. What is the Impact of Facilities on Student Achievement and Teacher Retention?

A. (Excerpt from the testimony of Kathleen J. Moore, Director of the School Facilities Planning Division, California Department of Education to the US House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor February 2008)

“There is a growing body of research on the importance of school facility condition, design and maintenance on student performance and teacher workplace satisfaction. Numerous studies have confirmed the relationship between a school’s physical conditions and improved attendance and test scores, particularly in the areas of indoor air quality, lighting, thermal comfort and acoustics. Poor building conditions greatly increase the likelihood that teachers will leave their school. Not surprisingly, building age, quality and aesthetics also make a difference. Research also indicates that student attitudes and behavior improve when the facility conditions improve. Teachers report that adequate space and access to technology are important variables to deliver curriculum. Also of note is the impact of school facilities on community vitality. School quality has a direct and positive impact on residential property values, new or well-maintained school facilities can help revitalize distressed neighborhoods, and school quality helps determine localities’ quality of life and can affect the ability of an area to attract businesses and workers”. ([Click here for the complete testimony.](#))

22) Q. What are the economic effects of school construction in California?

A. Prior to the passage of our state’s 2004 statewide facilities bond measure, an analysis was conducted to determine the economic benefits of such a bond measure on the California economy. The analysis found that the expenditure of funds for school construction will generate economic impact which greatly exceeds the direct construction expenditures. In the last two statewide bond cycles alone, the approximate \$10 billion already expended created over 175,000 jobs and doubled the direct impact on the economy to approximately \$20 billion because construction activity generates additional business and employment in sectors which provide the lumber, concrete, and many other goods and services which go into the construction and modernization of schools.

23) Q. How long will it take for the work to get started?

A. Building would commence in the summer of 2009 and projects would continue through 2012.

24) Q. Will the new construction and modernization projects be disruptive to the student’s education?

A. The architects will work closely with the District to coordinate the most disruptive construction projects with semester, holiday and summer breaks. These arrangements and procedures will allow all facilities to be modernized within a relatively short time span and minimize the impact on the instructional program for students and staff. Careful consideration was given to the project timeline so that students would not have to be in temporary housing for more than one school year at a school that is being modernized or rebuilt. There will be an education process at each school facility so that staff, parents, students and other community

members will be kept apprised of the project's progress. Updates will be provided monthly during construction. The District has an excellent history of performing expansion and renovation projects in a manner that is the least disruptive to school operations. In 1997 the district implemented a 10-week modernization schedule at the Tahoe Valley and Al Tahoe sites. At that time, schools in the State would bring in temporary housing for this type of project and displace students and staff throughout the school year. This type of fast track project management and scheduling has now become common throughout the State for modernization work, minimizing impacts on students and staff.

25) Q. How were the facilities standards determined?

A. The facility standards adhere to the standards set by the California Department of Education, the California Office of Public School Construction and the Division of the State Architect, as well as all federal standards and regulations.

26) Q. How can I be sure the money will be spent on the recommended projects? Who will oversee the work to assure that budget and timelines are met?

A. State statute requires that all bond proceeds must be spent on capital facilities and that a Citizens' Oversight Committee be appointed to conduct annual, independent financial and performance audits until all bond funds have been spent to ensure that the bond funds have been used only for the projects listed in the measure.

27) Q. How can I be assured there will be enough money to complete the work specified on the bond project list?

A. The total construction costs were based on detailed information gathered by architects and engineers and professional construction cost estimators. Each project has an inflation factor built in to include its share of costs for the election and bond issuance, architectural work, engineering, inspection and similar planning costs, construction management, and a customary contingency for unforeseen design and construction costs. These costs will be updated regularly throughout the program to ensure that ongoing costs are reported at regular intervals.

28) Q. If the project comes in under budget, what will happen to the leftover bond funds?

A. If the project comes in under budget and if there are no additional projects on the allowable projects list, projects identified that are "below the line" will be funded. The remaining bond proceeds will be used to make bond debt service payments.

29) Q. When the work is completed, will members of the local communities be able to use the facilities?

A Yes, the schools and their grounds are already used by the community for recreational and educational purposes as required by the Civic Center Act. These facilities will continue to be available to the public seven days a week and, in fact, expand opportunities for community use.

30) Q. How will this bond impact people who don't have children or whose children attend private schools?

A. Schools are a focal point of pride in communities throughout El Dorado County. As residents, we all will benefit from the civic pride in providing safe and modern schools for the education of our current and future students. In addition, as discussed above, school facilities and grounds are available for use by the entire community. South Tahoe High School is the only facility for grades 9-12 in South Lake Tahoe. Students coming from both public and private K-8 schools attend one comprehensive high school.

31) Q. When is the election?

A. November 4, 2008.

32) Q. What happens if the bond measure does not pass?

A. In light of the fact that Measure A was defeated by only three percent, the Board of Education felt that it was imperative to bring the measure back to the voters in a final effort to retain eligibility for the \$15.4 million of State matching funds. The District is proceeding with architectural designs in the hope that the measure will be approved in November. The costs can be recovered from the bond proceeds or will be paid for through Developer Fees if the measure fails. The District will become ineligible for the \$15.4 million in grants in 2009 if it cannot provide a match for that funding. Other school districts are already in line to receive the dollars that are not claimed. Building deterioration will only increase in severity and magnitude unless addressed. Additionally, the current construction costs of \$450 per square foot will be greater the longer the projects are delayed. It is unlikely that the opportunity to be eligible for these school improvement grants will be available for years to come.

33) Q. How do I get more information?

A. Please feel free to contact:

Dr. James R. Tarwater
Superintendent
Lake Tahoe Unified School District
1021 Al Tahoe Blvd, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150
(530) 541-2850 ext. 225

34) Q. How do I schedule a tour of the facilities?

A. The District will be scheduling tours of its facilities with a review of prior projects, current conditions, and future projects in September and October and will publicize that information in the local newspapers. Special requests for individual or group tours may be made by contacting the Superintendent's office at (530) 541-2850 ext. 225