

Larson moving from STHS to district office

By Kathryn Reed

South Tahoe High School is nothing like it was eight years ago. And that's a good thing.

While it took many people – including the voters of the school district – to help transform the school, it was the leadership of Principal Ivone Larson that led the charge.

Larson has known for some time this would be her last year at the helm of STHS. What she found out April 22 is the board agreed to hire her as assistant superintendent of secondary curriculum and instruction, career technical education. This is a part-time position.



Ivone Larson had a special pink hard hat to wear during all the construction at STHS. Photo/LTN file

“Ivone is an incredible visionary. She has certainly been a gifted grant writer. We’re hoping she will continue to bring needed funds into our district,” Lake Tahoe Unified School District board President Wendy David told *Lake Tahoe News*. “She has been a relationship builder. She is passionate about

the opportunities we can give our kids.”

Larson said part of her accomplishments are luck – like being in the right place at the right time. But the truth is if she had not had the vision or grant writing skills, the improvements to the school site would not be what they are. She helped the district secure millions of dollars beyond what the voters approved that went into transforming STHS from a rundown old school to a state-of-the-art center of education.

“I’ve had the ride of a lifetime,” Larson told *Lake Tahoe News* of her experience these last eight years. She said she has grown professionally and personally.

The next chapter will build on what she has been doing. It will also take some weight off Superintendent Jim Tarwater, especially as the state increases its mandates on local districts.

LTUSD has not had an assistant superintendent since Barbara Davis left in August 2005. And she was full time. At the end of the 2010-11 school year Tarwater also took over many of the human resources duties when the director’s position was eliminated.

“The board has been interested in putting back into our administrative budget a position that could really be of help to Dr. Tarwater,” David said.

More money is likely to be flowing to LTUSD from Sacramento in the next eight years because of the makeup of students, class-size reduction and career technical education.

“We are transforming education and that will take a lot of people at every single level of education,” Larson said.

She calls the changes “the most revolutionary things I’ve seen in California education.”

Funding, Common Core and assessment accountability are the big

changes. LTUSD is in the process of implementing the Local Control Funding Formula, Local Control Accountability Plan, Common Core, and the Smarter Balance Assessments – all state requirements.

“The cool thing about it is it includes the voice of everybody,” Larson said.

While she is excited about the next step, she is already realizing leaving South Tahoe High is going to be more difficult than she expected.

“It’s harder than I thought,” Larson said. And while she will still be around, she said, “It won’t be that day-to-day with the kids.”

But her motto is, “Dream big and it can happen.”

Now the district is in recruiting mode for a principal at STHS.