



Dec. 23 - Jan. 8, 2014

Architect chosen for Lake Wilderness project

The Tahoma School Board has chosen the architectural firm that will design the Lake Wilderness Elementary School modernization.

[TCF Architecture of Tacoma](#) scored highest in an evaluation of nine firms that submitted proposals. The school board voted to hire TCF at its Dec. 16 meeting. The firm specializes in design of schools and other public facilities.

A panel of school district and community representatives interviewed architectural firms and recommended a list of top choices to the school board. The panel includes School Board President Mary Jane Glaser; Superintendent Rob Morrow; Lake Wilderness Principal Audrey Meyers, Ph.D; Christina Delia, representing Lake Wilderness PTSA; Maintenance Superintendent Elliott Traweek; Assistant Superintendent and Finance Director Lori Cloud; and Kasey Wyatt, the district's project manager.

According to the project description, the architects will determine the best approach to convert the school from 1,100 students to 550; the demolition or removal of multiple portable classrooms; potential demolition of one building; and complete systems upgrades including mechanical, plumbing, electrical, safety, reroofing, gym floor, parking, playground, fields and more.

Cloud said the next step is to select a general contractor that will work with the architects in a collaborative effort called GCCM (general contractor/construction manager). The same approach is being used on the new Tahoma High School project and is designed to be more efficient and less costly than traditional construction projects that are awarded to the lowest bidder at the end of the design process. Cloud said a general contractor is expected to be selected by mid-March. Initial school designs are expected by June, along with a construction timeline.

Superintendent Rob Morrow said the school board considers the Lake Wilderness project as a high priority.

"The school board is fully committed to funding a project that results in a 550-seat school," he said. Lake Wilderness is currently the state's largest elementary school. The renovation and construction project is being funded by the bond measure voters approved in November 2013.

Financial oversight committee selected

The financial oversight committee for the \$195 million bond measure has been selected. The group will have its first meeting Jan. 15, and will set its future meeting dates at that time. The committee is intended to meet quarterly for a report from Superintendent Rob Morrow and Assistant Superintendent/Director of Finance Lori Cloud; followed by any questions that they may have. School Board members Mary Jane Glaser and Tim Adam are liaisons to the committee. Committee members will be able to review all the spending and budgeting for the

construction of the new Tahoma High School and Regional Learning Center, as well as the Lake Wilderness modernization project.

Committee members include: District parents Kris Azizeh, Elaine Chu, Valerie Paganelli; Community representatives Warren Iverson (Greater Maple Valley Unincorporated Area Council); Bill Allison (City Council), Jennifer Karol (Maple Valley-Black Diamond Chamber of Commerce), Rock Jenkins (Rotary), Sue Boyd (Tahoma PTA Roundtable).

Community service replaces 'product' in senior projects ***THS makes changes to align STEP with Future Ready initiative's skills, goals***

Tahoma High School students will complete a slightly different senior project this year, with more focus on planning and community service – and no product requirement.

The changes are being put in place to bring the senior projects more in tune with the district's Future Ready movement and, ultimately, to make the process more useful and worthwhile for each senior.

“The reason we made this change was not that the projects were not great, but that they were not necessarily Future Ready-aligned,” said Dan Strojan, the Senior Transition Exit Plan (STEP) project coordinator for THS. He also teaches American government and global issues.

Future Ready is the district's initiative to expand opportunities and experiences from kindergarten through 12th grade, in order to help each student graduate with a fully-formed, viable plan for after high school, whether that means heading straight into the workforce, going to a two- or four-year school, getting a certification, going to a trade school, the military or something else entirely.

District officials hope to award diplomas to graduates who can be described as having the following Future Ready skills: Complex Thinker, Quality Producer, Self-Directed Learner, Responsible Decision Maker, Effective Communicator, Collaborative Teammate, Community Contributor and Conscientious Worker.

The STEP project will now include community service hours, two “tabletop” conversations about the future with family members, five after-high school plan options (with specific templates for each option), and adjustments to the oral board process.

“The whole idea with STEP is to ensure the kids who graduate from Tahoma have a viable plan when they leave – a plan that works for them; they can (articulate) it. They know why they're doing it and that it's doable financially and with their family situation as well,” Strojan said.

The biggest change is that the seniors used to create a product. That requirement is gone, and in its place is the post-high school plan, along with a 10-hour community service requirement.

“Those hours can be spent any number of ways, split up or all at once in one place,” Strojan said.

Other components of the STEP program include completing a job shadow (which must be in a field the student has some interest in) and two “tabletop” discussions with their parents.

Students still will complete oral boards in the spring, after they have had a chance to work through the project requirements and have conversations with their families.

“I think the kids have really bought into understanding the value of having a plan,” Strojan said. “I think we're moving in the right direction.”

Tahoma's senior projects started as a result of state requirements regarding 13th year plans, said Diane Fox, associate principal and director of Careers and Technical Education for THS.

“This is how we prepare kids for life outside high school,” Fox said, noting that what prompted the changes was the fact that Tahoma graduates did not always know what came next.

“We have students who don’t really know where they will end up if they aren’t two-year or four-year. ... A two- or four-year plan isn’t always what fits a student best,” she said. “We want them to have a plan that they can actually do; not wake up the day after graduation and wonder, ‘What’s next?’”

In years past, an estimated 40 percent of Tahoma grads had what would be considered a viable plan. In 2014, that figure increased to 60 percent.

“We’re hoping for 100 percent this year,” Fox said.

[To read the rest of this article, click here.](#)

Tahoma Junior High students donate toys for food bank



Tahoma Junior High students help pack up presents donated by their classmates during the toy drive for the Maple Valley Food Bank. Several other Tahoma schools also collected presents for those in need.

Three local legislators visit Tahoma High School classes



Rep. Pat Sullivan talks with students in Daren Fickel's class regarding essays they are writing about "The Crucible." Sullivan fielded questions about college, asked the class about their plans for the future, and told them that education funding is his main focus.

Rep. Mark Hargrove visited Tahoma High School recently as well. Hargrove said on his Facebook page that he spent "A worthwhile couple of hours ... seeing firsthand how Common Core, class size, teacher evaluations, etc. work in real life."



Sen. Joe Fain also visited THS, and co-taught a lesson with Fickel. Fain teaches a political science class at Highline Community College.

NEWS BRIEFS

School board appoints new president; reorganizes

At last week's school board meeting, the board conducted its annual reorganization and chose Tami Henkel as board president. Bill Clausmeyer will serve as vice president and general finance representative, Didem Pierson is Teaching and Learning representative, Tim Adam is legislative representative, and Mary Jane Glaser is capital finance representative.

Math team members compete at state contest

Members of the Tahoma High School math team and Tahoma seventh- and eighth-grade math team traveled earlier this month to Moses Lake for a state competition. Overall, the eighth grade team came in 7th, and the high school team came in 10th in state.

Josh Pennington, 11th grade, was Tahoma's top-scoring student, coming in 33rd out of 70, adviser Malinda Shirley said.

Rohit Tripathy, seventh grade, came in 18th out of the top 100 algebra 1 students in the state. Eighth-graders Laena Tieng and Hitesh Poinpally came in 36th and 42nd, respectively, out of the top 100 geometry students in the state.

DISTRICT CALENDAR

COMING UP in Bear Country

WEDNESDAY, Dec. 23 - Jan. 2

Winter break; no school.

WEDNESDAY, Dec. 23

Boys basketball vs. Spanaway Lake, 2 p.m., THS

SATURDAY, Dec. 27

Girls basketball at Bethel High School, 6 p.m.

FRIDAY, Jan. 2-3

THS wrestling tournament at Auburn High School

SATURDAY, Jan. 3

Girls basketball at Bonney Lake High School, 6 p.m.



Send us your ideas

Do you have an idea for a staff member we should consider featuring; a cool program worthy of sharing with the community; or a question about Tahoma schools? Send us your ideas for Tahoma Matters at kpatters@tahomasd.us, or, post them to [our Facebook page](#).



What's for lunch?

[Click here to check out the district lunch menus.](#)

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