

New principal selected for Live Oak Elementary

By JONDI GUMZ

Sentinel staff writer

LIVE OAK — An administrator who won state and national recognition as a school principal will take charge at Live Oak Elementary in August.

Penny Taylor, the director of human resources in the San Jose Unified district, was hired by the school board Tuesday night. The job pays from \$55,596 to \$63,378, with a \$1,000 stipend for a master's

degree.

Taylor, who lives in La Selva Beach, led Foothills School in Arcadia, in Southern California, to recognition as a "state distinguished school" in 1990 and as a national "Blue Ribbon finalist" the following year. She has a master's degree from CSU Los Angeles and a doctorate from the University of LaVerne, where she focused on staff development.

Of the 24 candidates, Taylor stood out because of "her level of

expertise," Superintendent Steve Herrington said, noting that her doctoral thesis emphasized building the strengths of individual people into a cohesive whole. She began her career teaching English as a Second Language in Los Angeles, after a stint in the Peace Corps, where she spoke Turkish. She also spent a year as a district administrator in Pajaro Valley.

Herrington said Taylor is looking forward to connecting with

students, staff and community at a school after working in a large metropolitan district for five years. The San Jose district has 33,000 students.

Parent Vicki Shook, who is president of the school site council, said she was "thrilled" to have Taylor get the job.

"It's like a new school, with this reorganization," Shook said. "It's been a lot of change, but she's up to the task. She has a vision of

excellence for students and the staff."

The Live Oak campus is being downsized, and some teachers are leaving for new assignments at Estrella Del Mar, which will become the third elementary school in the district.

Shook said it was "disheartening" to see principal Kitty Dixon

step down because she was a strong supporter of the multi-grade program that started last year. But she's eager to start planning for next fall and hopes the new principal will "applaud what we're trying to do."

Taylor will start work Aug. 6. A reception to welcome her will be scheduled for mid-August.