Davidson: Commitment to listen, learn, and act

Publisher's note: ***Lake Tahoe News asked candidates for South Lake Tahoe City Council, Lake Tahoe Community College, Lake Tahoe Unified School District, Douglas County School District, South Tahoe Public Utility District and Lake Valley Fire Protection District a series of questions. We are running the responses in the order received. All profiles may be found under the Special Projects listing and then the 2106 November Candidate Profiles category.***



Anne Davidson is running for the Area 1 seat on the Lake Tahoe Unified School district board.

Name: Annie Davidson

Age: 43

Job/profession: Independent education consultant/educator

What boards, commissions, or other experience, including volunteering, do you have?: Local:

· Tahoe Parents Nursery School board, 2015-2016

· Parent Teacher Association board and volunteer at

Sierra House Elementary, 2014-2016

· Tahoe Women's Community Fund member, 2015-2016

· Warm Room volunteer and advisory board member, 2016

· American Youth Soccer Association coach, 2015 and 2016

· After-school enrichment program lead for Sierra House Elementary, 2015-2016

· Marcia Sarosik's Dance Studio volunteer, 2014-2016

Regional/national:

· American Educational Research Association – SIG Officer 2013-present

· National Council on Measurement in Education – Committee chair 2013-present

Why should voters vote for you over another candidate?:

· I am excited to serve on school board by listening, learning, and acting on behalf of all members of the South Tahoe community.

· With my work experience and degrees from Cornell University and doctorate from University of Vermont, I have a strong working knowledge of education policy and issues. This knowledge will support the board with decision making, especially given the high turnover in the board this year. My knowledge includes experience as a classroom teacher and parent, expertise in curriculum and assessment development, and experience in education administration.

· Because my husband Matt Lucksinger and I have two young daughters in the district, I can identify with parents – as well as teachers, administrators, and community members.

What distinct experience or competency makes you uniquely qualified to lead effectively as an elected official?:

· I have the ability and commitment to listen, learn, and act on behalf of students and families in our community, as evidenced by my work in the South Tahoe community to date. I work with the Tahoe Parents Nursery School as a board member and co-teacher, where directors Aileen Yure and Jennifer David support my candidacy. My work in school and volunteer programs demonstrates my capacity to work on behalf of students and families and respond to the needs of the community.

· I have a strong working knowledge of education policy and issues. My expertise and experience will help. For example, I worked for the Nevada Department of Education to address federal rules for assessment and accountability. I also worked in assessment development on behalf of the California Department of Education and many other state and local clients in various roles. I have led teams in government and in private industry with successful results. Finally, I have worked specifically on behalf of students with disabilities, English learners, and students in poverty in my 20 years in education.

Public agencies have been under scrutiny the last few years for lack of transparency and accountability. What will you do to ensure both?: · I commit to act with integrity.

· I will raise questions and seek answers.

· I hold myself accountable to all relevant rules and regulations (e.g., Brown Act, school board policy, LTUSD policy, CDE policy) and will be a resource for colleagues on these policies.

· I will be ready to question my fellow board members if I have any concerns related to transparency or accountability.

What stands out for you in the current budget that you support and that you would change?: · The transition toward local control funding is an important trend – and will require new evaluation in the coming year. District and board

have used LC funding to make many important and motivating decisions to support children. I am excited about the possibility of creating new opportunities for young children through expanded early childhood education by using the state funds that were previously held back.

· I'm concerned about the rising costs of benefits (increase of approximately 10 percent in 2015-2016 over the previous year) and will work to ensure that benefits remain strong for our teachers and staff going forward. I'm also concerned about the zero percent increase in books and supplies in the 2015-2016 over the previous year. The strain on schools to cover the classroom and library needs is evident.

Do you support current legislation for $15 minimum wage? Please explain: I support a livable wage. When it comes to the district staff who work hard to ensure our children have the best environment, nutrition, and support they can have, a livable wage is the least we can do. We should do more.

Do you support Proposition 55? Please explain: Yes, I support Proposition 55. Proposition 55 provides critical funding sources for education and health care. It does not raise taxes from the current rates, and it prevents massive funding cuts for public schools.

Describe three attributes for a successful board: · The board must always use the filter of "Is it good for kids?" to inform all decisions.

· The board members must be able to work together to formulate policies that make a difference for kids and support the teachers and administrators who serve them.

· The board must be able to entertain opposing points of view to inform decisions so that we're sure that our schools reflect the values of our community.

What are your thoughts about public employee defined benefits?: I support public employee defined benefits. I am concerned about the cost of benefits.

Please explain your position on contracting out work normally done by staff: If work that is usually done by staff can be done through contracted services, I would want to know before deciding:

1) what the time, schedule, and cost advantages to contracting are;

2) any ramifications to the current staff members' roles.

What is your 10-year vision for the school district?: 1) To develop for our teachers a comprehensive professional development plan that is aligned to the California state standards, tailored to our district, and drives toward success for all students;

2) To attract fantastic and excited teachers to our district;

3) To maintain and expand the compelling programs already alive in the district, such as the two-way language immersion, environmental science, sports medicine, and arts programs;

4) To collaborate with public and private partners – including the city – to enhance the experiences that our children have to learn and grow;

5) When the time comes, to transition successfully to a new superintendent who fits our district well;

6) To develop a vision for the following 10 years.

What one vote in the last four years that the current board made do you disagree with and why?: I wished that the board and district had been more revealing to the public regarding the high school accreditation results of the last

accreditation round. However, without more information, I would like to reserve judgment on the issue.

How many meetings have you attended this year for the board you are running for?: I have reviewed all meetings and agendas for all meetings in 2015-2016 year and have attended one meeting in person.

What do you know about the strategic plan, finances, debt, goals of the school board?: I have reviewed the following reports and documents and am happy to discuss specific questions anytime.

· Education Technology Plan – Lake Tahoe Unified School District

· 2014-2015 budget – Lake Tahoe Unified School District

· 2015-2016 budget – Lake Tahoe Unified School District

· Local Educational Agency Plan – Lake Tahoe Unified School District
Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) – Lake Tahoe Unified School District

· Measure G Bond Projects – Lake Tahoe Unified School District

Being on the school board means working as a team. How will you work with the next board for the greater good of the community?: I will listen, learn, and act. I will raise critical questions so that all Board members will benefit from my expertise, experience, and perspective. I will also drive toward consensus when decisions need to be made.

What should be the three main priorities for the board?: 1) Professional development plan: Ensure that all district educators are supported to provide the best instruction possible, including a well-designed and tailored professional development plan.

2) High school accreditation: Ensure that the high school is accredited for six years in its next review.

3) Elementary success for all: Ensure that all students in the district are achieving and growing in their learning across all school programs and with all necessary supports.

What do you know about Common Core? What is your opinion about it?: I have worked with the Common Core state standards since they were conceived and carried out in conjunction with the federal Race to the Top initiative. I worked with Nevada educators to roll out the CCSS. I have worked with multiple state assessment and curriculum programs to build assessments aligned to the CCSS. I have volunteered in South Lake classrooms where the Common Core curriculum is in use.

As a district and board, we are not in a position to approve or decline use of the Common Core. We must align our work to the California-approved standards. If the community would like to challenge the Common Core, I am happy to listen and help formulate a statement to the California Department of Education on behalf of our South Lake community.

How can the school district partner with the city to improve high school graduation rates?: Graduation rates are a critical indicator of success and effectiveness of our district. We need to work to keep grad rates ever higher. The city of South Lake Tahoe together with the LTUSD could promote high school completion by:

· Addressing issues of poverty that create barriers for students to complete school (e.g., transportation, academic support, mental health, nutrition);

· Working with youth services to ensure students have the safety net and social support to finish high school;

· Promoting high expectations for all students through mentorship;

· Promoting various tracks to success including both college and career readiness as well as CTE;

· Support district activities that engage students in high school (e.g., performances, sports events, cultural fairs, etc.);

· Encouraging private internships for students in areas of their interest.

I'm sure there are more ways, too – and I'm eager to explore them.

What is your opinion about career and technical education at the high school level?: Career and technical education is a vital part of our schools' offerings.

Do you support the expansion of charter schools? Why or why not?: I support charter schools. Here are some of my critical requirements for charters:

1) There is a clear mission for the school that drives its creation and success;

2) The school leadership is strong and aligned to the goals and mission of the school;

3) The charter school holds itself accountable to the South Tahoe community for its evaluation.

What are you thoughts on the accreditation status at STHS?: The STHS must be accredited. We need to work toward the highest level of accreditation (i.e., six-year).

Tell us something about yourself that people may not know: I love to sing, create music, write songs, and perform. Look for me in a TOCCATA concert or at a local open mic.

What conflicts of interest do you anticipate between being a board member and education consultant?: Because my work as an

education consultant is limited to work with clients outside the South Lake Tahoe community, I do not see this work conflicting with my work on the school board. Rather, I believe that this work will feed my work on the school board, keeping me abreast of national and state issues, current trends in education, and policy at federal, state, and county levels.