Reilly: Dedicated his life to education

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.***



Larry Reilly is running for the Area 1 seat on Lake Tahoe Unified School District's board.

Name: Larry Reilly

Age: 63

Job/profession: Retired English and social science teacher/coach

What boards, commissions, or other experience, including volunteering, do you have?: I have served on the South Lake Tahoe Little League and Babe Ruth baseball boards. I am a member of Kiwanis International. I taught kids workshops for

LTCC. I helped start the community basketball program on Saturdays for children 5 to 13 years of age. I have taught summer school social science classes for LTUSD. I was the assistant coach for STHS basketball program for 12 years and the basketball camps for 20 years, including international travel with players for several summers.

Why should voters vote for you over another candidate?: I have dedicated my life to education. I entered school at 5 years old and never left until last year when I retired. I have over 39 years of teaching experience. My wife and I have lived in this community for 37 years. I have two children who have graduated from Lake Tahoe Unified School District and are college graduates. I would like to give back to the students of Lake Tahoe Unified and the families in South Lake Tahoe.

What distinct experience or competency makes you uniquely qualified to lead effectively as an elected official?: I have worked as a teacher and athletic director/dean of students in my 39 years experience in public education. I have taught civics for over 20 years and understand the all aspects of U.S. government. My students learned the federal, state and local government processes through experiential learning and became informed voters as a result. These experiences uniquely qualify me to serve as a school board trustee.

Public agencies have been under scrutiny the last few years for lack of transparency and accountability. What will you do to ensure both?: The new school board must change the culture in the school district. Communication must be the number one priority. Parents and teachers must understand the strategic plan of the district. Parents, teachers, administrators, and the superintendent and school board must design the best strategic plan for a quality education for all children.

What stands out for you in the current budget that you support and that you would change?: I am currently studying the budget and am not comfortable answering this question completely.

Do you support current legislation for $15 minimum wage? Please explain: I can see both sides of the issue from the employer and employee position. I support the minimum wage so that people can support their families.

Do you support Proposition 55? Please explain: Yes, I support Proposition 55 because revenues will maintain funding for public schools and colleges. Moreover, Proposition 55 will increase funding into the state's Rainy Day Fund. The passage of Proposition 55 will ensure school districts not having to return to the 2010 funding levels and protect from having to make massive budget cuts, teacher layoffs, larger class sizes, fewer services, and tuition hikes.

Describe three attributes for a successful board: 1) Engage in realistic goal setting and monitor progress.

2) Make data driven decisions to identify student progress and then justify board decisions based on data.

3) The school board must craft a positive working relationship with the superintendent, teachers, administrators, and parents based on respect, honesty, cooperation, and a strong commitment to student success.

What are your thoughts about public employee defined benefits?: I support benefits for full time public employees.

Please explain your position on contracting out work normally done by staff: I believe that if employees are qualified, they should be considered for the job.

What is your 10-year vision for the school district?: Continue our high rate of graduating students – Expand the CTE program – Increase test scores, continue to increase in student enrollment, continue to support the TWBI and EL programs, increase literacy, reinstate a six year WASC accreditation for the high school continue to attract highly qualified teachers, administrators, and support staff, maintain quality facilities

at all school sites, strive to have every student feel connected to and engaged in his/her school through programs such athletics, academics, activities, career education and community services.

What one vote in the last four years that the current board made do you disagree with and why?: I understand why the school board eliminated the position of the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction during the lean years. In the last three years the board could have hired for this position. We have fallen behind in Common Core, curriculum implementation, teacher training, and student support. We must have a highly qualified curriculum and Instruction leader who will devise a five-year plan that will give each school the resources for success.

How many meetings have you attended this year for the board you are running for?: I have attended several meetings since January of 2016.

What do you know about the strategic plan, finances, debt, goals of the school board?: Again, I am currently reviewing the data.

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 would use my lifelong years of experience as a teacher and coach to a build a culture of trust and respect on the board. Effective teamwork must be committed to common goals. Respect of others' opinions and respectful intellectual discourse and active listening to all opinions before making decisions will create trust amongst the board for the greater good of the community.

What should be the three main priorities for the board?: Support for teachers and students to effectively implement Common Core state standards. The most important responsibility of school boards is to work with their communities to improve

student achievement. Continue to solicit community input for the LCFF; communication must be our top priority. We must make sure that all parents are aware and informed about the options they have in our schools and forming common goals for our students from that input is essential. Students will have the best educational opportunities when teachers, parents, and community members share their visions and place students needs first.

What do you know about Common Core? What is your opinion about it?: The Common Core State Standards Initiative is an educational initiative adopted by 45 states and the District of Columbia that details what K-12 students should know in English language arts and mathematics at the end of each grade. The initiative is sponsored by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers and seeks to establish consistent educational standards across states as well as ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared to enter college programs or to enter the workforce. The goal of Common Core is to help students improve critical thinking skills and develop a stronger understanding of concepts rather than simply memorize facts. The district must improve Common Core implementation with a strong teacher-training program. Teachers must have the opportunity to shape their curriculum to best meet their students' needs.

How can the school district partner with the city to improve high school graduation rates?: We already have a high graduation rate (between 92-97 percent over the past five years) in Lake Tahoe Unified School District, but there is always room for improvement. Partnership and student internships in our community would engage students in seeing the culmination of their educational experience through hands-on knowledge of careers and work experience that exist in our community. The STHS and Mt. Tallac High School senior project graduation requirement touches on this somewhat, but engaging students in school to work programs directly through local

businesses would benefit both students and future employers in our community. “Unity” is the key part in community.

What is your opinion about career and technical education at the high school level?: We need to continue to expand our career technical education programs at the middle and high schools and maintain the ones we have already implemented. The CTE program will continue to draw new students to our district from many areas in California and beyond. Our facilities are second to none and we should continue to explore new programs such as hospitality and hotel management, and computer programming.

Do you support the expansion of charter schools? Why or why not?: While I believe strongly in the many merits of public education, I understand why a charter school might meet the educational needs of some families. However, charter schools must be held accountable and meet the same standards as public schools so students have access to a quality education.

What are you thoughts on the accreditation status at STHS?: My understanding is that South Tahoe High School has received a two-year accreditation and is going through an appeal process. While STHS usually receives a six-year accreditation, the current outcome needs to be reviewed so the high school can return to that status. I am interested in hearing the outcome of the appeal so STHS can move forward.

Tell us something about yourself that people may not know: I’m pretty much an open book. One thing most people don’t know about me is that I was first in my family to go to and graduate from college.

As a retired teacher, how can the public be assured you will see all sides and not just the teachers’?: My reputation precedes me. I have always been and always will be a student advocate. Decisions I have made as an educator have always been in the best interests of students. I view schools as an

all-inclusive learning environment.

Inmate crews dwindle as wildfire season grows longer



Inmate crews were used on the Washington Fire near Markleeville in 2015. Photo/Carolyn E. Wright/Copyright 2016

By Joseph Serna, Los Angeles Times

Already plagued by years of drought and a beetle infestation that has reduced millions of trees to kindling, California is facing yet another crisis as it enters the brunt of wildfire

season: a dwindling roster of prison inmates who can battle blazes.

The gap is due largely to California's controversial realignment law, which mandates that inmates convicted of non-serious, nonviolent and non-sexual offenses serve time in county jails rather than in state prisons.

As a result, the pool of eligible firefighting inmates has been shrinking.

Read the whole story

Murillo – a stabilizing force for LTCC

By Kathryn Reed

A fiscally sound institution. That's what Kindred Murillo thought she was walking into. It was just the opposite.

It took her four months after coming on board in July 2011 to figure out that Lake Tahoe Community College's budget wasn't what it appeared to be. Previous administrators, with the board's approval, were carrying over $1 million every year that wasn't projected.

The South Lake Tahoe institution was bleeding financially, with a tourniquet applied each year, but no surgeon in the house.

"I don't do business that way," Murillo said.

She was speaking Sept. 15 at the annual convocation before

faculty and staff. In many ways, it's like the state of the college address as well as a pep rally for the coming year.

This was Murillo's last such talk, as she is leaving in February. She tendered her resignation earlier this year.



LTCC President Kindred Murillo on Sept. 15 talks about accomplishments during her tenure. Photo/Pat Leonard-Heffner

In her first three years about $2.5 million was cut from the budget.

"Leadership for the college used to reside in the president's office," she said. "It now resides throughout the campus. I think it's important we all have some voice for what happens."

The focus has been returned to students – what their needs are. This includes working to create a schedule that meets their needs and not the desire of those who are teaching the

courses.

Murillo has established a leadership team that she says is strong, reliable and will carry the college forward – and will listen to students, faculty, staff and the community. The budget now reflects actual expenses and revenues. Strategies and goals have been developed, and are in the works to be achieved.

New programs must pass the test of whether they meet the strategic goals.

“We now have a vision. We know where we are going. We want to be a destination college,” she said.

With this area not growing, it’s attracting students from elsewhere that will help sustain LTCC. It means probably building dorms to house them. A study about student housing should be completed in November.

It means expanding distance learning. It means being creative, like the program LTCC participates in to educate prisoners.

While things have improved under her watch, Murillo said the road ahead is not going to be easy. Projections are for small community colleges to see a drop in enrollment over the next 10 years.

Toward the end of Thursday’s talk she got a bit melancholy, even appeared to be on the verge of tears, as she thanked those in the room for helping mold her into the president she has become.

“Don’t every stop being a student of life,” Murillo told them.

As she said her parting words of wisdom she was met with a standing ovation and whoops from those who call her boss.

Davidson: Commitment to listen, learn, and act

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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.

Science of wildfires and tree-killing beetles

By Tara Lohan, KQED-TV

So far this year 4,636 wildfires in California have burned more than 200,000 acres. That's more fires than this time last year and more fires than the five-year average. In fact, in the last few decades, the number of large fires are on the rise across the Western United States and the length of the fire season continues to expand.

There are some areas, particularly in parts of the southern Sierra Nevada, where up to 85 percent of the large trees are dead or dying.

One of the biggest reasons for this is warming temperatures, which are impacting snowpack and ushering in an earlier spring. California has an added challenge of dealing with a five-year drought. The drought and climate change have allowed bark beetles to get the upper hand in swathes of forest in the Sierra Nevada, creating what ecologists call "pulses" of tree mortality. To the average person it looks like a lot of red

needles on dead trees.

Read the whole story

TRPA-created commodities impact development

By Kathryn Reed

As the economy continues to improve in South Lake Tahoe, it means people want to build – it's happening at both ends of town as well as in mid-town at Harrison Avenue.

But what most of these developers need is commercial floor area, or CFA. This is a commodity created by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency as a way to control growth. It worked – to a point.

The problem today is that instead of a free market and zoning dictating development, it is money – as in who has a bank account big enough to pay for CFA. The other problem is the city has a loose policy as to how CFA is divvied out, and no firm price.

City staff said the going rate for CFA is $30 per square foot.

Plus, it's not like there is an unlimited supply of CFA.



Additional commercial floor area was acquired at Harrison Avenue to create a rooftop dining area. Photo/LTN

Jurisdictions have received CFA allocations from TRPA for various reasons that are then earmarked for specific area/community plans. TRPA has since stopped awarding CFA. The city has some banked CFA from trades, sales and development projects.

And while the TRPA recognizes the CFA and tourist accommodation unit commodities are impacting progress, that bi-state regulatory board doesn't anticipate changing the current structure for at least a couple years.

The city's criteria for CFA allocations in part include:

- The project being in an adopted area or community plan;
- The project must be mixed use;
- Distressed properties being remodeled or removed;
- There must be an economic benefit to the community.

Before the August council meeting the city had 57,596 square

feet of CFA. With what was approved last month and what is being requested this month, the council will be down to 36,671 square feet if all get green-lighted.

Two applicants came before the City Council last month asking for CFA, and more are expected to do so next week when the electeds meet.

In August, the council voted 3-2 to sell 600 square feet of CFA to Tom Haen at $20 a square foot. Councilmembers Tom Davis and JoAnn Conner were in the minority. Davis argued that it should be free. Councilmember Hal Cole reminded him that he twice voted to charge for CFA, and said reversing policy now would set a bad precedent.

Haen needs the CFA for a project on Industrial Avenue, which he is trying to bring into compliance.

“There is nothing in the policy in any form to provide CFA or any commodity for free,” City Attorney Tom Watson said. “The practice of this council for the last two years is to charge for CFA.”

The other request in August was from Mike McKeen and John Cefalu, who are partners in a project at Harrison Avenue.

“Now you are changing the rules on us. That is unfair and unreasonable,” Cefalu told the council before the vote.

After some heated discussion, the council unanimously agreed to give the men the 970 square feet of CFA.
Ultimately the council made its decision based on Cole agreeing with Cefalu’s recollection that the CFA ended up in the Bijou-Al Tahoe Area Plan from TRPA as an incentive for redevelopment.

Redevelopment is exactly what this project is. Cefalu and McKeen are demolishing the better part of a building that used to house a bagel shop and standup paddle rental.

“We want to use the upstairs deck. That needs CFA,” Cefalu told *Lake Tahoe News.*

The goal is to be done by Christmas, with a handful of tenants occupying the structure.

“The upstairs will probably be office or light commercial; something that doesn’t require a lot of parking,” Cefalu said.

He wouldn’t say what the bottom area will be, but sources have told *Lake Tahoe News* a brewery is likely.

As for the other uses for CFA, on Sept. 20 three mixed-use projects spearheaded by Steve Leman and Clint Purvance are expected to be on the council agenda. A project on 4th Street needs 5,366 square feet of CFA, South Avenue needs 6,161 square feet, and Emerald Bay 7,828 square feet.

Turnbull: A new voice with education experience

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Bonnie Turnbull is running for the Area 3 seat on the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board.

Name: Bonnie Turnbull

Age: 57

Job/profession: Master’s of arts in teaching, California certified teacher

I was a classroom teacher for 12 years for grades 5, art and PE at Pioneer Elementary in Colorado Springs, Colo., and grades 4-6 at Grass Valley Charter School in Grass Valley.

After becoming an Air Force family, it better supported my family to take temporary and part-time work. These listed below represent the range of my work.

– tutoring economically-disadvantaged students in basic skills

– teaching art and puppetry in summer program,

– substitute teaching regularly in a class of developmentally delayed preschoolers

– teaching ESL to adults at LTCC

– teaching art, most recently our Juvenile Treatment Center

-substituted in classrooms at every age level throughout the LTUSD system

What boards, commissions, or other experience, including volunteering, do you have?: I am serving my second term on the Parks and Recreation Commission. I am the former co-vice president of Friends of the Library.

I am an active community volunteer. Here area some examples of educational programs I do.:

Master gardeners of Lake Tahoe classroom presentations

Bringing Arts To School

South Tahoe Environmental Education Coalition programming: i.e. Children's Forest, Wonders of Water field trips

Tahoe Science Center's Science Expo local organizer and presenter

Lake Tahoe History Museum third-grade tour guide

Why are you seeking this position?: This my first campaign ever so this is a big step out for me. I have been encouraged and inspired by our wonderful local leaders to take on more of a leadership role in our community.

Why should voters vote for you over another candidate?: I offer fresh enthusiasm, a new voice, and decades of educational experience, which I would love to use to benefit our community. I am a hard worker, visionary, and would value the opportunity to help lead our district through the adoption of new state standards and in energy innovation.

What distinct experience or competency makes you uniquely qualified to lead effectively as an elected official?: I have an exceptionally wide and deep experience at the cutting edge of public education. While I taught at Pioneer Elementary, we won the highest national award, the Blue Ribbon.

Grass Valley Charter School implements Expeditionary Learning, a project-based learning model. Project-based learning is at the cutting edge of education today and can offer strategies to help balance more traditional teaching strategies.

I am a graduate of the city's leadership program, Citizens' Academy, am serving my second term on the Parks and Recreation Commission, have gathered support and shepherded the Tahoe Discovery Center project through to concept development stage, and have numerous other leadership experiences throughout the city.

Public agencies have been under scrutiny the last few years for lack of transparency and accountability. What will you do to ensure both?: Electing representatives who have the courage to dialog with the community and stakeholders and to make clear decisive decisions in the open is the best solution. Representatives must also have the commitment to stand behind their decisions and to continue the dialog with the community as changes are enacted..

What stands out for you in the current budget that you support and that you would change?: The district has taken a great step forward by contracting with Climatec to evaluate investments in future energy savings. We must plan for the transition to alternative energies. I would like to evaluate how energy might be more efficiently, and cleanly, applied

Similarly, we should look at transit dollars. Perhaps we can find ways to more efficiently support access to our schools of choice, availability of transit for field trips, after school programming and sports, while reducing our carbon footprint through strategies like innovative scheduling and sharing of resources.

Money saved should be allocated to core services such as teacher training and collaboration time. The teachers are the center of education and need the tools, time and training to

implement new and challenging programming, services and strategies.

Do you support current legislation for $15 minimum wage? Please explain: I support a higher minimum wage. As one of our larger employers, the school district can help support our families by offering a living wage. When families can afford the basics of food, clothing and housing, they can better support their children's education and development.

Do you support Proposition 55? Please explain: California schools already spend less per pupil, and have higher class sizes than the national average. It is essential to, at a minimum, sustain our current level of funding. Prop. 55 will extend a current tax on the wealthiest Californians to support public health and education. As a great society, we must take care of our people through basic health and education services.

Describe three attributes for a successful board: 1. Open mind. Values diverse perspectives and can team effectively in working toward a common long-term vision

2. Time to devote to research, communications, meetings, and

3. Integrity and trustworthiness to operate openly, respectfully, and always with the best interest of students in mind

What are your thoughts about public employee defined benefits?: Defined benefits for our public school employees are an essential part of the employment package. The specifics are subject to negotiation.

Please explain your position on contracting out work normally done by staff: The school system, as major employer in our community, has a moral obligation not to "outsource" jobs from the community and undermine support for our local workers.

However, contracting out work may be useful in some situations.

For examples.

– Temporary work which would otherwise overburden staff

– Gains a higher level of expertise not generally affordable or needed long term

– Offers a cost-sharing opportunity

What is your 10-year vision for the school district?: The past boards have guided the district through the building of a world-class high school facility and other infrastructure upgrades.

Let’s keep working to make sure our delivery is as gorgeous as the building. Education is more than test scores. We must chart with solid agreement on what qualities are essential. I believe that we must start with the child and connect him or her to the wonder of the world by offering moments of discovery, the opportunity to follow passions, the blending of disciplines through project-based work, and fostering social and emotional development

The community into the schools, the schools into the community. It takes a village—and the great outdoors—to raise our next generation. The entire community—especially the school board—needs to be responsive to and flexible to the community whom they represent.

Look to the future. The board needs a plan that supports the demands of a new century. Let’s support the adoption of Common Core standards—with their focus on critical thinking and problem-solving skills and Next Generation Science standards—with the focus on by offering the time and opportunities for training, planning, parent communication and collaboration.

Lower district carbon footprint and increase energy independence.

What one vote in the last four years that the current board made do you disagree with and why?: Before committing to reopen of Al Tahoe, I think we need a comprehensive cost benefit analysis. Opening a new building incurs the costs of structural upgrades, hiring more administration, adding bus routes and leaves the Boys and Girls Club homeless. A rec center may be able to accommodate them, but we are years away from a building. We need to be clear that any growth in school population is a significant enough, long term trend that it warrants a permanent solution.

The board has guided the district through the building of a world-class high school facility and other infrastructure upgrades. Now, I would like to see focus shift to teachers, the key to our kids' success. Let's support their adoption of Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards by offering the time and opportunities for training, planning, parent communication and collaboration.

How many meetings have you attended this year for the board you are running for?: Few. I have dedicated many, many hours to working directly with students over the last decade. I am inspired to run for office because I want help craft larger solutions with, and for, my community. People who know me will vouch for my extreme diligence in researching and preparing for any role or project I undertake. To that end, I am have been studying minutes from past meetings, board policies and current trends in education in preparation for this role.

What do you know about the strategic plan, finances, debt, goals of the school board?: If elected, of course, I will immediately dedicate myself to learning everything that I can about the district. As a homemaker and high school parent, I have the time to dedicate to understanding this complex institution at the heart of our community.

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?: The board members are community representatives, and our community has diverse voices so opinions and experiences will naturally differ. The board receives and consolidates the range of community, student, and teacher concerns and ideas, then helps shape policy to address those concerns keeping student success as number one priority.

Therefore, working as a team to find common ground is crucial. Steady, wise progress rests on compromise. Therefore the board is designed with a democratic structure which means nothing meaningful is accomplished without the agreement of a majority—and preferably more.

What should be the three main priorities for the board?: Advocating for school policies, budget allocation and curriculum which best support children's achievement. Establishing a long-term vision which drives every aspect of the district's program.by being responsive to the values, beliefs and priorities of our entire school community, then evaluates the school system's progress toward accomplishing the district's vision

Communicates that progress to the local community. An ambassador for public education. Board members are advocates for students, the districts' educational programs and public education. They build support within their communities and at the state and national levels.

Setting strategic goals for achieving energy independence throughout our school system which will help ensure our schools remain viable into the future.

What do you know about Common Core? What is your opinion about it?: Common Core standards, in concept, are a significant improvement over earlier national standards. They focus more on developing thinking skills and less on rote learning of

information. Vast amounts of data are readily available on the world wide web. Being able to wisely adapt and apply that data to the rapidly changing conditions is key to student success.

However, the devil is in the (test) detail. Any high-stakes, national testing program carries great risks because the test questions—both content and style— drive the curriculum. Unless we have a national dialog about what makes high quality education, we leave it to test developers to determine it.

Content: Science is embedded into the literacy test for elementary grades. Science may be reduced to knowledge of vocabulary. We will likely sacrifice time spent learning the analytic thinking skills of the scientific process like critical thinking, accurate testing of hypotheses, and problem solving. Also, if we do not regularly test and publicly post results from distinct science tests as with other subjects, science will be de-valued in classrooms.

Style: To keep testing profitable and affordable, four for-profit publishing companies distill learning into small, easily-tested bits. So, for example, we may test spelling but not the complex task of writing though, in the world of word processing, teamwork and rapid change, effective communication is a key skill for success.

How can the school district partner with the city to improve high school graduation rates?: Our graduation rates are already wonderful. However, getting out of our silos benefits everyone by maximizing resources and opportunity. Coming to agreement on most effective management of our playing fields is a good start. Exploring opportunities with TTD to bring public buses to the high school to support transit for after school programs may support broader participation in after school opportunities. Strengthening our partnership with LTCC can offer new opportunities for our highest achieving students. If district facilities, like the theater, were more available as the public the schools would better serve as

welcoming centers of community life.

What is your opinion about career and technical education at the high school level?: We have invested in extraordinary career and technical education facilities and a dedicated program coordinator. We provide high school students with highly motivating experiential, hands-on, and whole child education. I would like to see these strategies permeate education at every level. They are highly motivating to students and build the classroom community.

However, I also hear community concerns that more fundamental skills like financial management, are not sufficiently addressed.

Do you support the expansion of charter schools? Why or why not?: Charter schools fill a need or desire not met by traditional schools. Therefore, they can provide valuable alternatives to families However, the implementation of charter schools can be problematic without proper oversight.

The fundamental issue is that public schools must be aware of and responsive to community needs in a way that fills the desire for an alternative school.

I have been a teacher in both traditional and charter schools, but I am a staunch supporter of public schools so fundamental to a democracy. The best solution is for to traditional schools to embrace the charter school practices of responsiveness, community engagement and innovation.

What are you thoughts on the accreditation status at STHS?: I wait to see if procedural errors—as have been suggested—are the cause of the loss of accreditation. Until then, I have no opinion.

Tell us something about yourself that people may not know: I love the Tahoe lifestyle. Whether it’s paddling a six-person outrigger canoe, hiking, road or mountain biking, skiing or

tending my vegetable garden, I love to be outside, I am a strong supporter and participant in the arts. I sing in TOCCATA, a regional choir that brings classical choral music to the Reno-Tahoe area.

You often are aggressive in how you go about getting what you want. How will this work in a team setting like the school board?: Yes, I do have a passion for making a great idea come true. But I love few things better than working with an inspirational team to accomplish great things. In fact, job sharing for four years as a teacher remains one of the highlights of my career.

Sandoval calls for more appealing school lunches

By Sandra Chereb, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Cafeteria lunches have been the butt of jokes for generations of schoolchildren. Mystery meat, chef's surprise and cardboard often come to mind.

Jokes aside, it's a conundrum Gov. Brian Sandoval contemplates seriously. Why can't school lunches taste better?

Sandoval raised the issue Tuesday as the state Board of Examiners approved nine contracts between the Nevada Department of Agriculture and various vendors worth $16.7 million to provide food for school breakfast and lunch programs. Funding comes from the federal government.

Read the whole story

Mega-development in Martis Valley approved

By Kathryn Reed

KINGS BEACH – A 6.6-acre ridgeline parcel bordering the Lake Tahoe Basin is going to one day have 760 units built on it.

In approving the project on a 4-1 vote Tuesday, the Placer County Board of Supervisors did not take the recommendation of the **Planning Commission**, which in July denied the project on a 5-2 vote. Supervisor Jennifer Montgomery was the dissenting vote Sept. 13 on the multiple issues related to the project.

Mountainside Partners of Truckee, the developer, and landowner Sierra Pacific Industries have been working on this project for at least 10 years. Build out is expected to take 20 years.

Known as Martis Valley West, the project has been controversial because it takes undeveloped land in Truckee that borders Lake Tahoe and turns it into a subdivision for second homeowners. The proponents have said they expect 20 percent or less full-time occupancy.

Montgomery voted no because she said the project goes against all the policies the county has been adopting, which call for any new project to be next to existing development. She was also disappointed that the original plan to connect the project to Northstar ski resort has been scrapped.

She was not alone in her opposition. Of the 60 people who spoke, 43 were against the project, 16 for it and one didn't take a side. Hundreds of people filled the North Tahoe Events Center for the all-day meeting that ended at 5:30pm – it

started at 9:45am.

“A vote today for this project would be a vote against Lake Tahoe,” Shannon Eckmeyer with the League to Save Lake Tahoe told the supervisors.

While the project is completely outside of the basin, it was acknowledged that it will impact the region at least in terms of traffic. Those vehicles in turn affect air quality and lake clarity.

Traffic congestion on Highway 267 is already problematic. People worry this project will make it even worse. And if the area needs to evacuate, residents wonder how that will happen without the loss of life if the roads are clogged and options to escape are limited.

Transportation consultant Gordon Shaw said the increase in time to get places because of the new residences would be negligible. What might help speed the flow is if Caltrans makes this a four-lane highway, which is on the books – but without funding or a timetable.

Opponents don’t believe enough study was done on the cumulative effects of projects already approved. Proponents say there was plenty of review.

While the threat of a lawsuit was broached, it was acknowledged making decisions based on potential litigation is no way to run a county. County counsel has said the environmental document is sound and is not worried that the Attorney General’s Office said otherwise. This was the same stance when the AG weighed in on the Squaw Valley plan and the county did the opposite of what the state’s top lawyer said.

Placer supes believe the environmental gains will trump any flaws in the plans. They opted to trust staff and what’s in the environmental document.

The community plan allows for 1,360 units, nothing allocated for conservation and no recreation trails. The developer's proposed 760 units – with another 600 being permanently retired, 6,376 acres preserved and 40 acres of trails are what sold the electeds.

The proponents in the last few months also agreed to up their workforce housing contribution. Originally they wanted to pay a mitigation fee. They conceded to build 47 units on the property. This would represent the midpoint between the minimum and maximum number of people working there. They also agreed to pay for another five units at $117,000 each as an additional mitigation fee. Placer County could use that money for housing elsewhere.

McLaughlin: Understands the meaning of team

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.***



Dan McLaughlin is running for one of two seats open on the South Lake Tahoe City Council.

Name: Dan McLaughlin

Age: 65

Job/profession: Salesman, volleyball coach

What boards, commissions, or other experience, including volunteering, do you have?: I was chairman of the South Lake Tahoe Parks and Recreation Committee when Measure S was passed and as such attended many board meetings as both a speaker and a listener. I am a past president of the Optimist Club and was on the board for Silver State Youth Sports.

Why are you running for City Council?: I have always had a passion to serve my community and now that I no longer coach high school sports, I feel the time is right to pursue this passion.

Why should voters vote for you over another candidate?: I have already proven I can work as a part of a team to get things done with my efforts to pass Measure S. I have been very involved in this community for over 40 years and seen the city grow and evolve. I have stayed abreast of the issues we face on a daily basis and I am a good listener. I have done a lot during my life in South Lake Tahoe: worked various jobs, owned businesses, worked in the media, owned a home, raised a

family, volunteered my time and have spent 25 years working with youth as a high school coach.

What distinct experience or competency makes you uniquely qualified to lead effectively as an elected official?: I have always been someone who gets things done. I find common ground and work to build alliances for the betterment of all sides of issues. I have no hidden agendas and will tackle each issue from the perspective of what is best for the city of South Lake Tahoe today and in the future.

Public agencies have been under scrutiny the last few years for lack of transparency and accountability. What will you do to ensure both?: As a high school coach, I have lived in a glass house for over 25 years. I have learned the best way to accomplish anything is to be honest and straightforward. The citizens of South Lake Tahoe have a right to know what their government is doing and why, and I will work from that premise.

What stands out for you in the current budget that you support and that you would change?: In looking over the 2015-2016 budget, there are a few areas I feel need to be addressed. We need to come with a long-term solution to road maintenance, we need to protect the senior center and we need to relocate the streets corporate yard from Rufus Allen to D Street. I also believe we need to look into forming a public/private partnership to build a field house, a structure that can accommodate year round recreation.

Do you support current legislation for $15 minimum wage? Please explain: The $15 minimum wage will be the law by 2022 and to me it is far more important to be prepared for its impact than to debate its merits.

Do you support Proposition 55? Please explain: I support Proposition 55. I am a strong advocate for education and believe this is a good way to ensure monies earmarked for

education will not be diverted. I also believe in supporting the healthcare programs that this initiative is designed to fund.

Describe three attributes for a successful council: I believe a city councilperson must be a good listener, passionate and open minded: They must listen to their constituents and their arguments on all sides of issues and respect their positions; they need to be passionate about serving their community and doing what is best for all regardless of political, social or personal pressures and they must be open minded enough to be able to change their minds once they have a better understand of all the facts regarding each issue.

What are your thoughts about public employee defined benefits?: Defined benefits and defined contributions both have their pros and cons. I believe that as an employer, the city should offer its employees a choice between the two and let them decide.

Please explain your position regarding contracting out work normally done by staff: I am not a big fan of contracted work because it costs the taxpayers more than it would if it were done by staff and the city does not have the essential controls in place, but there will be times when it is necessary to contract work so that projects are completed in a timely manner.

What is your 10-year vision for South Lake Tahoe?: In 2026, I would like to see the South Shore community as a having a more diverse economy with an increase in higher paying high tech jobs rather than being so dependent upon tourism. A community that is senior friendly, with numerous recreational opportunities, affordable housing, a solid infrastructure, a quality school system and that is a great place to raise a family.

What one vote in the last four years that the current council

made do you disagree with and why?: The biggest mistake the Council made was when they stopped televising the comments by the citizens during the non-agenda portion of the City Council meeting. It made it easy to assume that the council lacked transparency and credibility and it lead to a disconnect that has plagued the council ever since.

How many City Council meetings have you attended this year?: I haven't attended any this year because of my work schedule, but I have watched numerous ones on TV and stayed abreast of city issues by talking with several city employees including sitting council members.

What do you know about the strategic plan, finances, debt, and goals of the city?: I was very informed as to the city's strategic plan, finances, debt and goals when I was chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission when Measure S was passed. I am sure there have been some modifications since then, so I will have to catch up on the changes.

Being on the council means working as a team. How will you work with the sitting members for the greater good of the community?: As a coach, I have always taught my players that the best way to work as a team is to respect your teammates, even if you don't agree with them, and to follow the Golden Rule of being a good teammate: "Treat each teammate as you wish to be treated!" I intend to practice what I preach.

What should be the three main priorities for the council?: The main priority for any City Council member is to protect and enhance the quality of life for its residents. Having said that, the three current issues that have the most impact are 1) Work on finding a solution to the affordable housing issue; 2) Create new and maintain existing recreational facilities that include everything from walking to biking to organized sports activities; 3) Find ways to grow our economy in a more diverse manner so we are less reliant on tourism and have the ability to withstand economic downturns.

What have you done to make yourself ready to be a council member?: As chairman of the Parks and Rec Commission, I worked closely with City Council members on recreation issues and gained a great deal of respect and understand what it takes to be a city councilperson. As a member of the media, I have developed and maintained friendships from all walks of life in this community and constantly engage in discussion of the various issues our community faces.

What role should government have in housing for residents?: I support [El Dorado County Supervisor] Sue Novasel's plan to create a public/private task force to look into the issue. Only through a partnership can anything be accomplished. One of the things the city can do is look for ways to grow the economy in a manner so we are less dependent on the tourism industry. The telecommuter can live anywhere, if we create an environment where they can succeed in South Lake Tahoe, perhaps we can get them to relocate their businesses here as well.

How can the city partner with the school district to improve high school graduation rates?: The graduation rate at both South Tahoe and Whittell high schools is above the national and state averages. But we can do more. South Tahoe High School was designed to attract that telecommuter and prepare students for life in the high tech world. If we can bring in more high tech businesses, it will help increase high school graduations.

How can local government support and expand job creation and small local businesses?: The city itself cannot create jobs except for city jobs, but it can create an environment that encourages job growth and small local business growth. I believe that environment needs to be less dependent on tourism.

If you believe in the one South Shore concept, what would you do to further make this a reality? If you don't believe in

blurring the state line, why don't you?: We need to think of ourselves as the South Shore community and not California vs. Nevada. I was one of the first to bridge that gap by putting on events that required cooperation from both sides of the state line. It took patience, the need to swallow one's pride and a belief in the spirit of cooperation, so I know it can be done. The state line is blurry to most residents, so we need to build on that fact and I have a history of doing just that.

What are your views on:

a: Vacation home rentals: There is a delicate balance between the economic importance of vacation home rentals and the need to protect the quality of life of our permanent residents. There needs to be some kind of restrictions in place that will minimize any negative impact vacation home rentals may have on their neighborhood but at the same time doesn't have a negative impact on this industry. We have an initiative in place that addresses one element of this issue and we need to give it the full 12 months to determine its impact.

b: Loop road: Traffic congestion on Highway 50 through Stateline is a major issue causing many people to use residential streets as an alternative. I used to live on Chonokis and I can tell you firsthand that these residential streets were never designed to handle this kind of traffic and how it negatively impacts these neighborhoods. Something needs to be done to get this traffic off our residential roads. The Tahoe Transportation District, the agency who has jurisdiction over any loop road project, has five plans that are at the environmental analysis stage that address this issue. I want to wait until all the analysis is complete and review them before deciding to support or oppose their loop road project.

c: City streets: Our streets take a beating between the amount of traffic they have to sustain and the wear and tear they receive being in this mountain environment. We need to develop

a long-term plan to maintain our roads and in fact our entire infrastructure on an on-going basis.

d: Relationships with other public agencies: Every public agency has an agenda based on that agency's philosophies. The only way to work with them is to find common ground and build a relationship that fosters an environment of collaboration.

e: Recreation: We are in the business of recreation. We need to continue to create recreational opportunities, build more recreational facilities and maintain the ones we have. It should be one of our top priorities.

f. TRPA defined commodities: I support most of the elements in this definition, however, I also believe is room for exceptions, in this case regarding affordable housing. TRPA plays an important role in every decision made in the Lake Tahoe Basin, and I am hopeful they can find a way to ease the financial burden on developers of affordable housing.

g. Transient occupancy tax measure: The transient occupancy tax is designed to improve the city's recreational facilities. I wholeheartedly support this tax measure.

h. Sales tax measure: [*He deleted this question*.]

i. What do you want the additional sales tax money to go to?: I am a firm believer in creating affordable housing, but I am not sure any additional sales tax money spent on this would be enough to have much of an impact. I am leaning toward preferring that any additional money go toward roads, but I remain open-minded.

Tell us something about yourself that people may not know: My ancestors were the first people of European descent to settle in what is now the town of Alturas, Calif., in 1870, just north of Lake Tahoe. They were among the first to build cabins in Lake Tahoe in the early 1900s, in fact my aunt used to tell me stories of her visits with Mrs. Knight in Vikingsholm.

As a coach you work with a lot of young people, how will you handle being surrounded by adults?: In order to be a successful coach, you have to work with adults in the school system in much the same way you do adults in city government. You must learn the art of transparency and diplomacy, I welcome the challenge. I love working with young people, it keeps me young of heart and I keep up with all the latest trends in communication. I will continue to coach, just not in high school.