

# Matthews: Will fight for every child

*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.*



Troy Matthews, while running unopposed for the Lake Tahoe Unified School District's Area 4 board seat, asked to answer the questions for the public to get to know him.

**Name:** Troy Matthews

**Age:** 32

**Job/profession:** Nonprofit management

**What boards, commissions, or other experience, including volunteering, do you have?:** I am a graduate of the Leadership

Lake Tahoe program and sit on the board for the Tahoe Regional Young Professionals, the Progress For Tahoe Steering Committee, and I am project director for the South Tahoe Drug Free Coalition.

**Why are you seeking this position?:** I am running to fight for every child, regardless of background, because I believe a good education is a human right.

**Why should voters vote for you?:** I don't have an axe to grind as I don't have children in the district and I have never worked for the district. I am a fresh young voice. I love this community and am the best choice to fight for every child, because I am only running to serve all youth and families to the best of my ability.

**What distinct experience or competency makes you uniquely qualified to lead effectively as an elected official?:** Education is in my blood. Both of my parents were teachers and my mother was a high school principal for 14 years. I grew up going to school board meetings with my mom. I was a substitute teacher in the Los Angeles Unified School District and then got a permanent teaching job in an inpatient treatment center for adolescents. From my very first day of teaching, I fought for students that traditional schools had given up on. I got my Master's Degree while teaching full-time. Currently, I work for Tahoe Youth & Family Services. I have dedicated my life to working for disadvantaged and at-risk youth. Fighting for quality educational opportunities for all youth is my life's passion, and this is what I carry with me to the LTUSD board.

**Public agencies have been under scrutiny the last few years for lack of transparency and accountability. What will you do to ensure both?:** The Brown Act goes a long way to ensure transparency. Public schools belong to the community. I will make sure that the LTUSD continues to be an open book that seeks positive constructive feedback from the entire community. I want to be an open pipeline for parent and

community contact with the district. I will always be available to discuss new ideas and hear concerns.

**What stands out for you in the current budget that you support and that you would change?:** I support CTE programs and AVID. I would like to see more support from the district for local pre-K and after school programs as well arts education for younger students.

**Do you support current legislation for \$15 minimum wage? Please explain:** I do support the \$15 minimum wage. I understand why people are opposed to it, but the fact is wages have not kept up with inflation over the past 30 years. According to research from Pew Charitable Trusts, 80 percent of Americans are in debt. It's not a mystery as to why: the cost of living is way too high and people don't earn enough income. South Lake Tahoe exemplifies this issue even more than most locales, unfortunately. It is simply not possible to live on \$9 per hour in this community. A wage of \$15 per hour for 40 hours per week means a yearly salary of about \$31,000 before taxes. Even that is not enough to support a family of four in California. Many parents cannot take an active interest in their child's schooling because of the amount of hours they have to work to make ends meet, and this negatively impacts student performance, and, at last count, nearly 250 youth in our district were homeless. Higher wages means more discretionary spending which boosts the economy, and that means we all benefit. At the same time, local regulatory agencies have got to make life easier for our small businesses. We have to create an environment where paying employees more does not amount to an existential threat to local businesses.

**Do you support Proposition 55? Please explain:** I do support Prop 55. Prop. 55 is an extension of Prop. 30, passed in 2012, which is set to expire in 2018. South Lake Tahoe schools greatly benefit from this measure at no cost to the vast majority of people who live here. Prop. 55 will prevent

billions of dollars in cuts to California schools while ensuring local control of funds.

**Describe three attributes for a successful board:** Compassion, transparency, and cooperation

**What are your thoughts about public employee defined benefits?:** Public employee benefits are essential to attracting and retaining qualified teachers and administrators. Teachers are often unfairly scapegoated for economic issues in the state due to their benefits. Teachers deserve every benefit they receive and the success of Prop. 30 proves that there are solutions to protecting funding for schools besides cutting wages and benefits for public workers.

**Please explain your position on contracting out work normally done by staff:** I do not support contract work that undercuts the wages and benefits of regular staff.

**What is your 10-year vision for the school district?:** I would envision that we have one of the highest graduation rates in the state; work with Douglas County and Placer County and Washoe County schools to promote lakewide educational cooperation and success; continue to grow CTE, AVID, and college readiness programs; continue to enhance the LCAP to include student wellness programs; promote civics education and the humanities to develop well rounded citizens of the nation and the world; develop environmental science and fire science programs utilizing the amazing natural resources all around us; become a hub for arts education with award winning music, culinary, studio art, and theater programs; become a hub for athletics, physical fitness, and sports science programs to fit our recreation destination and athletic community; have the majority of LTUSD students fluent in another language by the time they graduate; be known statewide as a community with some of the best schools in the country; continue to promote STEM education and integrate "STEAM" education adding an arts component; establish a K-14 education

culture in Tahoe; work to promote a four-year university in Tahoe and develop a strong partnership between the university and the LTUSD to keep local students local.

**What one vote in the last four years that the current Board made do you disagree with and why?:** While not every board decision has been perfect, I support the current direction of the board. I don't have a specific decision that I strongly disagree with. I do think the board needs to be more proactive in its governance and, as a board, establish a clear vision for the district moving forward.

**How many meetings have you attended this year for the board you are running for?:** Three meetings, including the most recent LTUSD board retreat.

**What do you know about the strategic plan, finances, debt, goals of the school board?:** I support the current direction of the district to foster growth of the whole student as well as provide continual educational opportunities to EL students and disadvantaged youth. The vast majority of funding for all California schools comes from the state level, which is why Prop. 55 is so important. School district budgets in California are incredibly complex, but the gist is: we need to increase spending per pupil to compete with other states. California is well below average in per-pupil spending despite the high priority the state puts on public education.

**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?:** Myself and other members of the board will without doubt have disagreements, but the students of the district must always remain the focus for the board. I will do what I can to voice my opinion and fight for what I believe in, but once the board has voted, that is the decision of the board. I will support it even if I voted against it.

**What should be the three main priorities for the board?:**

Increase parent involvement, attract and retain great teachers, increase graduation rates.

**What do you know about Common Core? What is your opinion about it?:** Common Core is a new set of standards for K-12 English and math competency established by the U.S. Department of Education. States may choose to opt in to these standards. California is one of 46 states to have opted in to Common Core. My thoughts are: the jury is still out. Teachers in LTUSD are still transitioning to Common Core, so it may take a couple years to know if they are successful or not. I believe the intent behind Common Core is good, but I also believe in local control of education. Every school district is unique. I will oppose Common Core if it proves to be a detriment to our students. I will oppose any test score requirements tied to school funding.

**How can the school district partner with the city to improve high school graduation rates?:** The city and the LTUSD can work together to increase parent involvement in the schools, and that means creating an economy where parents aren't forced to work three jobs and never see their kids in order to feed their kids. The 61 percent poverty rate for our students is a tragedy. I do not accept it. The city should also focus on fostering the growth of available and affordable housing in our community. The LTUSD can hire great teachers, but that won't matter if they have to leave Tahoe because they can't find a place to live.

**What is your opinion about career and technical education at the high school level?:** I strongly support it. I believe CTE has transformed education as we know it and made South Tahoe High a unique success story in California. Our students have learning opportunities few in other districts have.

**Do you support the expansion of charter schools? Why or why not?:** I support heavily regulated charter schools with identical standards to regular public schools. I believe

charter schools that go unchecked pull money away from public schools while not necessarily providing their students with a quality education. They can be essentially private schools that receive public funding. However, I do support innovation in education, and this is where charter schools can be very successful.

**What are your thoughts on the accreditation status at STHS?:** It is an unfortunate situation that needs to be remedied quickly.

**Tell us something about yourself that people may not know:** I'm terrified of flying, I love to cook, and I am a huge fan of the Los Angeles Lakers, unfortunately.

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## **Riddle: Preparing for this his whole life**

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Trey Riddle is running for one of two seats on the South Lake Tahoe City Council.

**Name:** Harold "Trey" Thomas Riddle III

**Age:** 38

**Job/profession:** Bar manager

**What boards, commissions, or other experience, including volunteering, do you have?:** My wife and I have spent the last few years settling into South Lake Tahoe after moving here from Hermosa Beach, where we were small business owners and active members of the Hermosa Beach Chamber of Commerce.

**Why are you running for City Council?:** We can do better.

**Why should voters vote for you over another candidate?:** Voters shouldn't vote for me over another candidate. A voter should vote for me because they feel my views as a whole align with theirs and that I would be their voice on the City Council.

**What distinct experience or competency makes you uniquely qualified to lead effectively as an elected official?:** I've always naturally gravitated toward leadership roles. From team sports to work environments, I have vast experience as a leader. I lead by example, and I believe a true leader is



there to serve others. Others are not there to serve the leader.

**Public agencies have been under scrutiny the last few years for lack of transparency and accountability. What will you do to ensure both?:** I think we should investigate the possibility of merging some of the many agencies in Tahoe and ensure that all meetings held by these agencies are open to the public.

**What stands out for you in the current budget that you support and that you would change?:** The largest revenue sources for the general fund are property taxes and transient occupancy taxes (TOT), both being at 19 percent. I like that a strong portion of the city's budget comes from outside the city. I would like to keep it that way, and look for ways to increase that percentage (Measure P, if it passes, is a special use tax so it won't go into the General Fund. If it fails to pass, I would consider amending it for the next ballot so that it goes into the general fund and only requires a simple majority for approval).

Nearly two-thirds of our city's general fund is spent on personnel; salaries, pensions, health care and other benefit costs. Police services comprise the largest share of the costs at 25 percent of the annual budget. Fire safety is a distant second at almost half of that. I believe we can reduce those costs and create more money for other community improvement projects by reducing overtime for police personnel and increasing volunteer patrols such as the STAR program.

**Do you support current legislation for \$15 minimum wage? Please explain:** Yes. In fact I believe the minimum wage for South Lake Tahoe residents should always be 20 percent more than whatever the California minimum wage is at any given moment. I feel this way because we are a town that runs on tourism, which makes us unlike other towns. We're not just moving money back and forth between our own residents; we have a large influx of money from outside of our city. The people

who bring this money in also put a heavier burden on our infrastructure which our residents must pay for, and they also force businesses to hire more people in the busy seasons than they can support in the off season, so our residents face layoffs and reduced hours in the shoulder seasons. A lot of businesses are all too happy to charge higher than average prices for this destination location, but they don't bother sharing that money with the people who make this town function. We can do better than the California bare minimum.

**Do you support Proposition 55? Please explain:** No. Higher income taxes are not the answer. When a government is irresponsible with the money it's been given, you don't respond by giving it more money.

**Describe three attributes for a successful council:** Open ears, open minds, and the willingness to compromise.

**What are your thoughts about public employee defined benefits?:** I wish every worker, public or private, could retire at 50 and receive 3 percent of their salary for every year they've worked, but that's not sustainable. I think we should honor the agreement we've already made with the current public employees and make some adjustments for new employees.

**Please explain your position regarding contracting out work normally done by staff:** People should do the jobs they've been hired to do.

**What is your 10-year vision for South Lake Tahoe?:** I would like to see the revitalization of South Lake Tahoe, with fresher, more homogeneous building facades and a well thought out and completed infrastructure that encourages an active and healthy lifestyle among its residents and guests alike.

**What one vote in the last four years that the current council made do you disagree with and why?:** One of the most recent votes, and that was the one to eliminate VHRs on multi-unit properties. Whether we like it or not, VHRs are vital to the

success of this city. VHR owners contribute to the largest sources of revenue for the city's general fund. Those are property taxes and TOT. Together they comprise 38 percent of the General Fund revenue. You can read more about my opinion on VHR's below and how we should treat them in relation to other property types. The reason I disagree with City Council's decision to ban any new VHRs on multi-unit properties specifically is because this is the only way some people can afford to own their own home. They live in one unit and have to vacation rent the other side. The City Council talks about affordable housing and then in the same breath turns around and eliminates the only chance some families have at owning their own place and maybe even gaining a little financial independence. It's hypocritical.

**How many City Council meetings have you attended this year?:** I watch all of the City Council meetings online and I encourage every resident to do the same if they can't make it there in person. Just go to [www.cityofslt.us](http://www.cityofslt.us) and roll over the government tab, then roll over City Council in the drop down box and click on Watch Council Meetings. There you can watch all of the council meetings as far back as 2007.

**What do you know about the strategic plan, finances, debt, and goals of the city?:** You don't have to read beyond the first sentence of the strategic plan to know all you need to know about it. It refers to the residents of South Lake Tahoe as the city's "customers." The City needs to get one thing straight; in business parlance the residents of South Lake Tahoe are not "customers." The residents of South Lake Tahoe are "the boss."

**Being on the council means working as a team. How will you work with the sitting members for the greater good of the community?:** I'll compromise where I can. Where I can't, I won't.

**What should be the three main priorities for the council?:** The

residents of South Lake Tahoe should always be the main priority, meaning we should take care of our neighborhoods first, then invest money in the tourist areas. Second, City Council should foster positive growth by making it easier for the private sector to grow South Lake Tahoe, then fill in the gaps with government funded improvements. Third we should investigate merging some of the many agencies in Tahoe to cut down on all of the red tape that has been preventing positive growth.

**What have you done to make yourself ready to be a council member?:** I've been preparing for this my whole life.

**What role should government have in housing for residents?:** None, directly. There's a lot of chatter about affordable housing. When I hear "affordable housing," I hear "let's round up all the poor people and stick them in one spot." The only role the government should play in housing is making sure that local residents are paid a fair wage and can afford housing that already exists. Then we wouldn't be spending tax dollars on housing projects and residents would be able to buy more luxury items thereby generating more revenue for the city in sales tax dollars instead of costing the city money in project housing.

**How can the city partner with the school district to improve high school graduation rates?:** That's something that needs to take place in the home. The city can monitor test scores and evaluate teacher performance, but if parents aren't teaching their kids the importance of education, none of that really matters.

**How can local government support and expand job creation and small local businesses?:** We need to refine the whole process when it comes to entrepreneurs trying to start a new business. All of the rules and regulations that have been put in place to try to improve the South Shore have had the opposite effect and they're choking the life out of our city. Everything is so

cost prohibitive that people can't afford to create their own startups here. So, our highway is littered with old outdated motels and dilapidated buildings instead of fresh new job-creating businesses.

**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 are one city divided by a state line. We share common interests. We're neighbors. It's important for us to work together as such. But, I also feel we need to get our own affairs in order before we start meddling in our neighbor's business.

**What are your views on:**

**a: Vacation home rentals:** I feel that a person's house is their domain. When someone purchases a home it comes with what's known as a homeowner's bundle of rights. One of those rights is the right of disposition. This means that the owner has the right to sell or rent their property at will.

I am aware that some residents take issue with vacation home rentals (VHRs), and the issues can sometimes stem from real problems, but I don't believe it's fair to say all VHRs cause problems or that it's solely VHRs that cause problems in our neighborhoods. We all have neighbors that are long-term renters or even homeowner occupied that generate as much if not more noise, more trash or more parking issues than the VHR's.

City Council should not be singling out VHRs when it comes to policymaking. If a VHRs spa jets are loud after 10pm are long-term renters' and homeowner occupied spa jets not equally loud? If a long-term renter or homeowner occupied unit has three cars in the yard and two illegally parked on the street is it not equally if not more burdensome than a VHR that's typically occupied only 25% of the time?

If City Council is going to regulate these issues, they need

to do it equally for all homeowners and hold everyone accountable for violations, not just VHRs.

I believe we can make our neighborhoods more pleasant with increased STAR patrols and stiffer penalties for infractions by VHRs, long-term renters, and homeowner occupied units alike, without singling out any one type of homeowner.

**b: Loop road:** I support democracy. Let the residents decide.

**c: City streets:** They're not safe for pedestrians or cyclists. Addressing this will be my number one priority on the council.

**d: Relationships with other public agencies:** Interagency cooperation is essential to progress.

**e: Recreation:** I love recreation. I recreate as much as possible. We should encourage more people to do it. I feel making our streets safer for pedestrians and cyclists is a great way to do that.

**f. TRPA defined commodities:** TRPA defined commodities are just one more thing getting in the way of positive growth.

**g. Transient occupancy tax measure:** I am voting yes on the transient tax increase. I feel tourists should share more of the burden they place on our infrastructure. The only thing I would have done differently is to have it go into the General Fund instead of being designated solely for recreation.

**h. Sales tax measure:** I am 100 percent against a sales tax increase. Sales taxes are a regressive tax that take a larger percentage from low-income individuals than high-income individuals, so it hits lower-income people harder. Here we are going on about affordable housing, then we turn around and try to raise taxes on the lowest-income people in the city. We can do better.

**i. What do you want the additional sales tax money to go to?:**

N/A

**Tell us something about yourself that people may not know:**  
Anyone who knows me knows I'm a new dad. Even if we just met. I can't stop talking about my 6-week-old son, Hank. He's by far the coolest thing I've ever done with my life.

Something people may not know about me though is my first brush with Tahoe. In college I was captain of the cross country team, and president of the student government and Herodotus Society, but I couldn't help but feel there was something missing. Then my counselor suggested I join one of the school's community service organizations. So I did, and immediately became more fulfilled. In 2001 I had the honor of riding my bike with the Journey of Hope team over 4,000 miles from San Francisco to Washington, D.C., to raise funds and awareness for children with disabilities. On one night of our 72-day adventure we stayed at Kirkwood after a full day of climbing. It was without a doubt one of the toughest legs of the journey. I grabbed a Kirkwood sticker and put it on my bike frame as if it were a trophy. It was one of the two stickers that I put on it throughout the whole trip. The other was from Roswell, N.M., of course. I still ride that same road bike with my trophy Kirkwood sticker on it. When I put that sticker on there, I had no clue I would wind up some day living in Tahoe and riding Kirkwood on my snowboard every winter. It's funny how things happen like that, almost like it was fate.

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## **Sheehan: Leading by example, hard work**

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Kelly Sheehan is running for one of two seats on the South Tahoe PUD board.

**Name:** Kelly Sheehan

**Age:** 58

**Job/profession:** Owner/manager Steamers Bar & Grill

**What boards, commissions, or other experience, including volunteering, do you have?:** I served two terms on the St. Theresa school board, two terms St. Theresa Pastoral Council and am currently on the St. Theresa Parish Finance Committee. I am currently the vice president of the board of directors at the district, as well as the board's alternate representative to the El Dorado County Water Agency.

**Why are you seeking re-election to the South Tahoe PUD board?:** I have gained so much knowledge these past four-plus years, leading me to believe I still have much to offer as a board member.

**Why should voters vote for you over another candidate?:** I have



no personal agenda and base my decisions on what is best for the district and its customers.

**What distinct experience or competency makes you uniquely qualified to lead effectively as an elected official?:** I have been in management for most of my adult life. I have always tried to lead by example and hard work. Objectivity is one of my best traits.

**Public agencies have been under scrutiny the last few years for lack of transparency and accountability. What will you do to ensure both?:** The district has policies and procedures in place to ensure transparency. I, along with fellow board members and staff, have just completed ethics training. The district and its board are always mindful of the importance of transparency.

**What stands out for you in the current budget that you support and that you would change?:** The district is on a good path with the budget and long term planning. Staff has done an excellent job of prioritizing projects. It is definitely a balancing act to keep rates reasonable without ignoring the infrastructure. I would not change this direction.

**Do you support current legislation for \$15 minimum wage? Please explain:** I struggle with the \$15 minimum wage as I am in an industry where the employees receive gratuities. As a small business owner, payroll is always one of your largest expenses. Someone, most likely the consumer, is going to have to help shoulder that cost. But I am a firm believer in a fair, living wage.

**Do you support Proposition 55? Please explain:** Yes, especially for the benefit to K-12 and community college education.

**Describe three attributes for a successful board:** Respect for your fellow board members, even when you may disagree with them.

Objectivity: making decisions based upon what is best for the

district and all of its customers, leaving your personal feelings and benefits aside.

Preparedness: do your homework and make informed decisions.

By the way, I feel our current board has all of the above attributes.

**What are your thoughts about public employee defined benefits?:** There has been such a large shift between the benefits of public and private sector employees in the last 40 years for multiple reasons. I feel the most important thing about public employee benefits is that they don't become an unfunded liability.

**Please explain your position on contracting out work normally done by staff:** This something that is done for various reasons, most importantly efficiency and cost effectiveness. I have no problem with this practice as long as those are the factors considered.

**What is your 10-year vision for STPUD?:** To continue to provide clean and safe drinking water, as well as environmentally responsible wastewater collection, treatment, and export for our community in a financially responsible manner.

**What as an elected official are the three things you are most proud of during your tenure?:** I don't know that I can name three specific things. But, I know that I have strived to handle myself in a gracious and adult manner even when being publicly criticized for decisions I have made. This was hard for me. By nature, I tend to be a people pleaser, I want everyone to be happy. But I know that cannot always be the case. I have based every decision made since being a board member on fact and the good of the district and its customers, whom I represent. I have never made a decision based on what would be easiest and most beneficial for myself.

**Which votes would you change and why?:** I would not change a vote.

**Being on a board means working as a team. How will you work with the other board members for the greater good of the community?:** I will continue to listen and be prepared, I will respect my fellow board members' opinions, while ultimately basing my decisions on fact, the good of the district and its customers.

**What should be the three main priorities for the board?:** 1.) Provide clean and safe drinking water.  
2.) Provide environmentally responsible wastewater collection, treatment, and export.  
3.) Make sure our infrastructure is able to provide protection against the devastation of forest fires.  
Further to achieve all of the above in a fiscally responsible manner.

**How do you balance the economic situation of the community with the infrastructure needs of the district?:** As I have said before, this is a balancing act. We need to be sensitive to our local economy, but realize the infrastructure ages regardless. We can't ignore the infrastructure. But, we need to explore every funding source, such as state and federal grants in an effort to keep our rates affordable.

**STPUD is often criticized for having some of the highest paid public employees on the South Shore. Any comment?:** It takes a significant responsibility and skill to maintain the district's systems, especially in Lake Tahoe's sensitive environment. We need to be able to attract and maintain a skilled work force. This is not to say that we should not ask for exceptional performance in return for one of the best local public compensation packages.

**When it comes to permits for construction, the district has high fees. Do you believe they are fair? Why or why not?:** I think they are bit high. I would like to see the board do some research and perhaps consider more affordable options.

**Tell us something about yourself that people may not know:** I am actually quite shy. Speaking in public is hard for me. I tend to get tongue tied around people I do not know and am not comfortable with. Once I do feel comfortable though, this all changes.

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## **Reilly: Dedicated his life to education**

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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 as 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 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 your 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.

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## **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 your 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.

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## **Turnbull: A new voice with education experience**

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***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.***



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 are 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 is 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 traditional schools to embrace the charter school practices of responsiveness, community engagement and innovation.

**What are your 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.

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## **McLaughlin: Understands the meaning of team**

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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.



for one of two open seats on  
the South Tahoe Public  
Utility District board.

**Name:** Randy Vogelgesang

**Age:** 59

**Job/profession:** Civil/structural engineer

**What boards, commissions, or other experience, including volunteering, do you have?:** City of South Lake Tahoe Building Board of Appeals, member Tahoe Engineers Architects and Surveyors, member South Lake Tahoe Rotary, president

**Why are you seeking re-election to the South Tahoe PUD board?:**  
To continue building upon my goals and accomplishments of my first term, which I outline below.

**Why should voters vote for you over another candidate?:**  
Because of my knowledge, experience and fiscally responsible approach to the challenges the district faces.

**What distinct experience or competency makes you uniquely qualified to lead effectively as an elected official?:** The experience I have gained making common sense engineering decisions in my business has helped greatly when making decisions for the South Tahoe PUD. I try to always use my knowledge of the district and its workings to make decisions in the best interest of the ratepayers. As president of the board for the past two years, I have made it a point to work with all the board members and to treat them with respect.

**Public agencies have been under scrutiny the last few years for lack of transparency and accountability. What will you do to ensure both?:** This has been an important issue for me and I have made it a priority to get as much information as possible about the district out to the public. I have long believed that better decisions are made when the public is informed.

During my first term the district hosted numerous public workshops focusing on the budget, priorities and long term planning. In addition I have encouraged (along with the board) Richard Solbrig, general manager, to be very active with public outreach on radio, TV and to numerous service organizations. The district's website ([www.stpud.us](http://www.stpud.us)) has recently been upgraded for easier use and greater access to information. At my recommendation, the district started archiving audio files of all of our meetings, which can be heard on the website. In the near future video files will be available on the website.

**What stands out for you in the current budget that you support and that you would change?:** The district's property tax revenue is still below the level of 2010. The challenge is to offset that revenue loss by increasing efficiency and seeking other sources of revenue such as grant money. It should be noted that the district has cut operations and maintenance spending by 20 percent since 2008-09.

**Do you support current legislation for \$15 minimum wage? Please explain:** No comment

**Do you support Proposition 55? Please explain:** No comment

**Describe three attributes for a successful board:** Communication, respect, cooperation.

**What are your thoughts about public employee defined benefits?:** I would prefer a defined contribution over a defined benefit plan as a way to control costs.

**Please explain your position on contracting out work normally done by staff:** I like to have work done in-house as much as possible but sometimes it is more economical to outsource due to expertise or staff work load.

**What is your 10-year vision for STPUD?:** I would like to continue with steady needed improvements to the infrastructure

to keep the quality of our service high, while being mindful of the cost to the ratepayers.

**What as an elected official are the three things you are most proud of during your tenure?:** Revising the rate structure (consumption vs. fixed costs) to more accurately reflect actual costs, reducing capacity charge fees, increasing transparency, water line upgrades and adding hydrants for fire protection.

**Which votes would you change and why?:** I am comfortable with the decisions I have made as a board member.

**Being on a board means working as a team. How will you work with the other board members for the greater good of the community?:** I touched on this above, but let me add that during my first term this board has worked well together, without acrimony, despite differences in opinion.

**What should be the three main priorities for the board?:** Striking a balance between infrastructure spending and rates. Salary negotiations. Public outreach.

**How do you balance the economic situation of the community with the infrastructure needs of the district?:** This is the most important question that I deal with on a daily basis. Too much spending on needed infrastructure burdens the ratepayer, but not enough could end up in costing more money in the long run. As a member of the finance committee I spend quite a bit of time working on both the annual budget and the 10-year plan. The way I try to achieve the balance between rates and spending is gathering as much information as I can to make the best decision I can.

**STPUD is often criticized for having some of the highest paid public employees on the South Shore. Any comment?:** Salary negotiations are one of the most important jobs that the board has. During these negotiations I have always fought for what is best for the ratepayers and will continue to do so.

**When it comes to permits for construction, the district has high fees. Do you believe they are fair? Why or why not?:** During my first term the board not only stopped large planned connection fee increases, they were lowered. It is my belief that these fees are still too high. I would rather make it easier for us to have more customers using our services than discouraging connections.

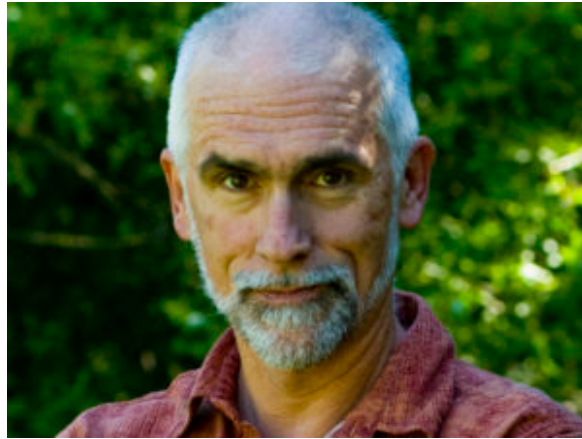
**Tell us something about yourself that people may not know:** My wife Cathy and I have lived in South Lake Tahoe for more than 30 years and raised two kids, Laura and Scott, who are now adults.

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## **Hamilton: Background, experience with LTCC**

***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.***





Dave Hamilton is one of two candidates for the Area 4 seat for Lake Tahoe Community College.

**Name:** David Hamilton

**Age:** 60 (as of October)

**Job/profession:** Retired college educator

**What boards, commissions, or other experience, including volunteering, do you have?:** Local organizations: Currently part of core group forming the Tahoe Arts Alliance; president, Tahoe Tallac Association board of directors; 2007 board member from 2004-2014; member Pathway 2007 Forum (TRPA and LTBMU plan updates) representing non-motorized recreation in the Lake Tahoe Basin: 2005-2008; member of Public Lands Working group for Placed Based Planning Workshops, 2007; member board of directors Tahoe Rim Trail Association 2000-2003; member of initial planning committee for Van Sickle Park: 2000; president Tahoe Area Mountain Bike Association 1998-2005; member board of directors, Tahoe Arts Project 1990-92; president, board of directors South Lake Tahoe Theatre Company, 1990-1994

Regional/statewide organizations: member board of directors California Educational Theatre Association, 1993-1999, 2004, 2006-08 representing higher education; president board of directors Northern California Educational Theatre Association,

1993-1995, vice president 1990-1993

**Why are you running for the college board?:** My first connection with LTCC was taking classes back in 1976. I was first employed by the college in 1977 and I first taught at the college in 1984 then hired as a full time instructor in 1989 working until 2008. I consider Lake Tahoe Community College my college and I have been involved with much of its history. I helped write the original mission statement, participated in many annual planning sessions and three accreditations. Not only is LTCC a vital fixture, but also a large part of our community's future. As a member of the board of trustees I want to continue serving the college in its important role for our students and community.

**Why should voters vote for you over another candidate?:** First, I have extensive background and experience with the college. As a faculty member over the years I connected with all types of students, getting to know them and understanding their academic needs. I was very involved with innovation in teaching and learning. In academic service I served as president of both the Academic Senate and the Faculty Association. I worked closely with the business office in the design and construction of the theatre as well as its yearly budget. I also served as a part time administrator gaining experience in administrative operations. I have worked as an administrator outside the district at other colleges, gaining insight to other ways of being successful within the California Community College system. But that experience is only one piece of why I would deserve the vote. South Lake Tahoe is my home town. I first moved to South Lake Tahoe in 1968. I graduated from STHS and have had about 38 full time years here. In that time I have been involved in many community projects and organizations. I have extensive experience in working as a member of a board of directors and feel I am innovative, collaborative and inclusive in that work.

**What distinct experience or competency makes you uniquely qualified to lead effectively as an elected official?:** Though I have all this experience with the college, it really just amounts to having knowledge and doesn't by itself make me an effective board member. I think what makes me uniquely qualified is that I have spent a large part of my career working collaboratively with groups of people to achieve a goal. Whether it is directing a play, which involves bringing a new group of people together to build a production, negotiating a union contract, working within the boards of various nonprofits or being a member of the Pathway 2007 Forum which updated the TRPA Regional Plan. I believe I have an ability to help synthesize ideas and discussion into agreement and forward movement. I enjoy group synergy and work hard to establish positive working relationships with individuals and the community.

**Public agencies have been under scrutiny the last few years for lack of transparency and accountability. What will you do to ensure both?:** I believe the college already does a good job making sure the community is aware of what is going on. Accreditation requires the college to be accountable for how it operates. Though accreditation is only every six years, it ensures the college has processes and policies that ensure it is staying on track. As a public agency under the Brown Act the public has access to all board meetings as well as documents such as the budget, policies and procedures, etc. The college has been good about providing easy access to those documents. As a trustee I would want to make sure the Board communicates with both the public and staff in an open and timely manner. Processes for communication need to be clear and effective. Any decision made should have background and justification available.

**What stands out for you in the current budget that you support and that you would change?:** The budget process with the college involves many layers. It would be difficult to pick

out a specific that is, or isn't, valid without understanding all the background and discussion. That being said, in a general sense and based on the past few years of data, I support the current budget being based on zero growth. The F2F FTE (number of general students) is still dropping and though it has been filled in in other categories it is a good idea to not over-project. The college has traditionally been fiscally conservative in budget projections and I think that is wise in the current climate. I also support the level of reserves and the additional funds for STRS/PERS reserve. In the change area, one of the things that stands out for me, though it is not in the current budget, is why the college is spending money from Measure F on the bleachers and scoreboard in the gym. To my knowledge they are not currently used much and we do not have any competitive sports that need them. Again, I wasn't in on the discussion, but that doesn't seem like a priority.

**Do you support current legislation for \$15 minimum wage?**

**Please explain:** Yes I support it. I think the improvement in living standards would outweigh the effect on employment and increases in consumer costs. In Tahoe it will be felt strongly because we have a lot of small businesses that are barely making it now and they will take the brunt of the change. But at the same time, students coming to LTCC from out of town need to be able to make a living wage while going to school, no matter what job they find.

**Do you support Proposition 55? Please explain:** Even though Proposition 30 was a temporary tax, I feel that we have been able to absorb it without undue stress to our higher income earners. In addition, Prop. 55 does not extend the one-quarter cent sales tax. The money helps in areas that always need help, schools and health care. Though the state is recovering from the recession, I think it will be beneficial to extend this formula.

**Describe three attributes for a successful board:**

Collaborative, innovative and responsive. They should be collaborative in making decisions using their collective knowledge in a synergy to make good decisions. They should be innovative in thinking as the college must grow and change with the ever changing environment of higher education. They should be open to new ideas brought forth as well being able to think outside the box. And they must be responsive to the public and staff of the college with open communication and dialogue as well as timely responses to issues and concerns.

**What are your thoughts about public employee defined benefits?:** Defined benefits have a long and involved history. The college deals with PERS and STRS. Unlike many other government entities, LTCC has not negotiated substantial benefits for retirees beyond the state level benefits. Both retirement systems are significantly out of balance in terms of unfunded liabilities. The process to make both systems fully funded has begun to take more money from both members and employers. LTCC, anticipating these continued increases is placing money into reserves to cover increasing costs. So the question is, is it worth it for the state to continue these systems as they are? Defined benefits have basically disappeared in the general workforce. Many people see them as a taxpayer gift to public employees. This is reinforced by sensationalized examples of the highest end of retirees, the people who make six figures in retirement. But the reality is that the average retiree makes significantly less and a large portion of their retirement is money they have contributed out of their salary. I think overall they are working to get the systems sustainable. As the economy improves and the market goes up, so too will the amount each retirement system has. For the college it is still a way to attract people to jobs. As the LTCC board we only have the ability to augment the retirement systems. And that is the place where we would need to be very careful in how much money that would be in the long term.

**Please explain your position on contracting out work normally done by staff:** In general contracting out work should only happen for a three main reasons. Either it is temporary work that staff does not have the expertise to accomplish, it is work that would overload staff beyond their ability to complete and/or an outside contractor will save a significant amount of money. Your question indicates work "normally done by staff", which would seem to indicate contracting out different services to a private contractor. It depends on the nature of what the situation is. If it is a long term situation then the benefits must be examined. An example would be janitorial work. It is often less expensive to hire a service to clean rooms, restrooms etc. than to hire full time janitors. But you have less control and flexibility with a service so you must balance the results with the costs. If there are substantial savings, that money could be put to better use, though on some level, you get what you pay for. An outside contractor does not necessarily have your best interests at heart, as their primary interest will be financial. I think the key is consistent monitoring of outside contracts to make sure you are achieving your goals with them.

**What is your 10-year vision for LTCC?:** It will be very interesting to see where the California Community Colleges are in 10 years. I believe the system is currently undergoing fundamental changes to its mission and what we see 10 years from now may look very different from what we see today. I would like to see LTCC continue to build a reputation as a destination college beyond the beauty of being in Tahoe. Part of this will be the introduction of new, unique programs such as the current fire science or wilderness programs that provide students training, certificates and/or degrees that will draw students from outside the area. The college will not be able to rely purely on transfer programs. If new programs can build the student population then that will help the college keep the breadth of programs it has now and will make it financially sustainable with faculty and staff making

equitable wages. I would also vision greater partnerships with universities and participation in offering Bachelor degrees. The potential for student housing is still a reality. If it is financially sustainable that could also provide a resource to attract and retain students.

**What one vote in the last four years that the current board made do you disagree with and why?:** Again, without having been in on the planning and discussions I wouldn't want to second guess decisions made by the board. It is also easy to see the results of a decision in hindsight and thus disagree with it. But I am of the belief that once a decision is reached, whether you vote to agree or disagree, you live with that decision and move on.

**How many meetings have you attended this year for the board you are running for?:** Over this year, none. I recently finished a one-year assignment as dean business, design and workforce at Cañada College in the Bay Area and was only home on weekends. Prior to that I have been to an occasional board meeting, though when I was Senate President I was at many. The agendas and minutes are posted, so it not difficult to keep up on discussion and decisions.

**What do you know about the strategic plan, finances, debt, goals of college?:** I have been catching up on the current state of the college. I have read the current plans and budget. Having been connected with the college I have a context for the content of the goals and strategic plan and understand how the college is moving forward.

**Being on a board means working as a team. How will you work with the sitting members for the greater good of the community?:** As I had stated above, I work well in collaborative decision-making. I already know the members of the current board and have worked with a couple members in different settings. As a new board member I would take the time to strengthen relationships with the rest of the Board

and not simply come in with thoughts about what I think should happen. The reason we are all elected is to represent the community and provide a collective voice to help direct the college.

**What should be the three main priorities for the board?:** 1. Help the college achieve its mission 2. Maintain the fiscal health of the college 3. Represent the public interest.

**What have you done to make yourself ready to be a board member?:** I suppose one way I have made myself ready to be an LTCC board member by being involved with the college and the community over the last 45 years. More specifically, I am now current on college policies and procedures as well the recent budget and issues the college has faced.

**What is your opinion about career and technical education at the high school level?:** CTE is a vital component of our education system. Along with providing a general education, our education system gets students ready for careers they will pursue in life. Many careers in today's world require training but not necessarily in a traditional academic environment. And many of these career paths can begin in high school. By providing hands on career training opportunities (CTE) in high school we can shorten the time needed for students to transition from high school into successful careers. And CTE is no longer seen as simply traditional blue collar jobs or an end in itself. CTE now represents pathways with multiple entry and exit points and also represents high paying careers. An example would be the tech industry. In high school students could get hands on experience in coding and/or graphic design which might transition them to a program at a community college where they could achieve a certificate or degree that would place them into a high demand area where they could earn a significant salary. At some point they might take that work experience and re-enter a training program to further their skills for a next level job or change careers entirely. The work they did in high school would fast track them at the next



level, having them career ready with less time and cost. The state is currently providing funding for these pathways through the CTE Transitions program, which connects CTE high school students with degree and certificate pathways in a community college.

**What will you look for in a new college president?:** If I am elected to the board, the new college president will have been selected and will be starting the same time I do. I have faith that the current board will have made the best choice based on the profile given in the search announcement. As the new superintendent/president begins I would look for the building of a solid relationship with the board, the college and the community. We are a small community and the more engaged and active the president can be with both the college community as well as our greater community, the better.

**Tell us something about yourself that people may not know:** Two things: First, I once performed with the San Francisco Symphony at Davies Hall and I don't play an instrument. They did a performance of "The Flood" by Stravinsky which had spoken parts, of which I got to do one. Second, I know Nancy Dalton who is also running. I think she is also well qualified and an excellent person and community member. It will be a win for the college either way.

**As a former instructor at LTCC, how can the public believe you will represent everyone and not just staff?:** I understand what it means to be a trustee. As a trustee I do not represent the staff at all. I represent the public interest and my job is to work with the entire board to help the college fulfill its mission and to make sure the use of taxpayer money is responsible. The only thing I represent as an individual board member are the people in Area 4. Even when I was an instructor at the college I understood the importance of every element of the college to make everything function well. I had no illusions that my needs were more vital than any others.

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# David: STPUD 6.5% rate hike was wrong

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Kirk David is running for one of two open seats on the South Tahoe Public Utility District board.

**Name:** Kirk A David

**Age:** 48

**Job/profession:** General contractor

**What boards, commissions, or other experience, including**

**volunteering, do you have?:** Youth coach for last 17 years. AYSO and club soccer, ASA and high school softball, Pop Warner football, high school basketball (boys and girls), Little League and Babe Ruth baseball.

**Why are you running for the South Tahoe PUD board?:** I want to be involved in our community and I feel this is a good opportunity to help and be a service by having a voice on the board. Life is full of challenges and learning experiences and I look forward to the opportunity.

**Why should voters vote for you over another candidate?:** My wife, Jennifer, and I were very fortunate to raise our two children here. I have roots in Tahoe and I am invested in our community and our future. I care about Tahoe's unique environment and understand and appreciate what our community requires.

**What distinct experience or competency makes you uniquely qualified to lead effectively as an elected official?:** My environmental studies degree and background in construction are two strong qualities in a board candidate. The skills I have acquired in owning and operating my business have given me the ability to develop efficient leadership skills that can motivate groups in a positive direction toward a common goal.

**Public agencies have been under scrutiny the last few years for lack of transparency and accountability. What will you do to ensure both?:** I am honest and fair and I would work with the district to ensure the same values and clarity that I believe in.

**What stands out for you in the current budget that you support and that you would change?:** I agree that the budget should not be dependent or reliant on guaranteed property tax increases. I don't agree with the 6.5 percent annual rate hike.

**Describe three attributes for a successful board:** The ability to work well together, work through tough conflicts, and

provide good service.

**What are your thoughts about public employee defined benefits?:** Great for an employee. Paying for the benefits is costly.

**Please explain your position on contracting out work normally done by staff:** If contracting out is costing more money, I would like to find a way for the work to be done in house.

**What is your 10-year vision for STPUD?:** Continue to provide the great services they provide. Continue and improve upon the environmental commitment our district currently has. Provide an affordable service for our local community.

**What one vote in the last four years that the current board made do you disagree with and why?:** The 6.5 percent annual rate hike. I understand the need for meters and improvements in our district, but I don't like the path of increased rates we are on.

**How many meetings have you attended this year for the board you are running for?:** I have yet to attend a meeting; I regularly read the board minutes.

**What do you know about the strategic plan, finances, debt, goals of the district?:** I've read the plan and I have seen their finances and goals online.

**Being on a board means working as a team. How will you work with the other board members for the greater good of the community?:** I work well with other people, and I have no doubt that I would work well with the board to serve our community.

**What should be the three main priorities for the board?:** Ensure the continued outstanding service our district provides, control our rate increases, work well with district staff.

**How do you balance the economic situation of the community**

**with the infrastructure needs of the district?:** The district must run as efficiently as possible to ensure rates stay controlled.

**STPUD is often criticized for having some of the highest paid public employees on the South Shore. Any comment?:** STPUD is known as being a good workplace, if elected I would know more about this topic.

**When it comes to permits for construction, the district has high fees. Do you believe they are fair? Why or why not?:** I feel the connection fees are high, as with water and sewer rates the connection fees increase each year.

**Tell us something about yourself that people may not know:** I worked as a deckhand on a whale watching/snorkel boat in Kaanapali for six months.