

LTUSD slashes 7 positions from payroll

By Kathryn Reed

Seven positions were eliminated Tuesday night by Lake Tahoe Unified School District's board of trustees.

Attrition and early retirements will account for most of the positions that won't exist in the 2011-12 school year.



The surprise on March 1 was the elimination of the NRJOTC instructor. This had not been on the radar of the board during recent budget discussions, though there was an awareness the Navy would eventually cut its funding. With the Navy providing more than 50 percent of the salary, the district could not pick up the rest of the expense. The Navy nixed the program because it wants 10 percent of the student body to be in the program. South Tahoe High has eight students.

The other positions cut include:

- South Tahoe Middle School, 6th-grade teacher
- South Tahoe Middle School, teacher physical education
- STMS, counselor
- Independent Learning Academy, teacher
- Director of Human Resources/Staff Development
- Bilingual Coordinator

For this part of the meeting board members Mike Doyle and Judy Cefalu were absent. Doyle arrived late to the special meeting.

The three in attendance for the whole meeting – Wendy David, Sue Novasel and Larry Green – asked Superintendent Jim Tarwater to bring back a detailed version of what the reorganization of the district will look so they know who will be doing what job.

Questions were brought up about Sue O’Conner, who handles English learners, and what happens with her departure.

Human Resources Director Jim Watson said O’Connor will work a few hours to pay for her health benefits, so it’s not like the position is being eliminated altogether.

“Sue is not going away. She will be able to help us out,” Watson told the board.

CFO Deb Yates said with fewer people it will mean reprioritizing what needs to be done.

“When you talk about reorganization, you look at the duties and pass them out to the administrative team because there is no one else to do it,” Superintendent Jim Tarwater said.

It’s expected the district’s attorney will be in town once a week to handle legal issues that had been handled in house before.

Lake Tahoe Unified needed to cut the positions based on declining enrollment and the threat from the state to keep taking away money. If the June ballot measure does not pass, the ledger will be an even darker shade of red.

In an effort to show its support for the measure, the board passed a resolution Tuesday night in support of continuing with the tax structure that is in place.

Lake Tahoe Unified is not alone in downsizing. Predictions are this will be a record year for teacher pink slips. About 30,000 teachers in California are expected to be notified by the March 15 deadline that their services are not needed for

the next school year. This is an increase of nearly 10,000 from a year ago.

If the June ballot measure fails, it will be a \$2 billion hit for public schools or \$330 for each of the state's 6 million students. What it will mean for LTUSD is more cuts to people, plus the likely elimination of programs such as class-size reduction, music and physical education starting in 2012-13.