

# Douglas County classified staff to receive 3% raise; teachers going to arbitration

By Kathryn Reed

Contracts with seven of the eight bargaining units within Douglas County School District should be complete after today's special meeting.

The board is meeting at 4:30pm May 6 in Minden to approve a two-year contract with the Douglas County Support Staff Organization. It calls for a 3 percent raise retroactive to July 1. Salaries would remain at that level for the 2014-15 school year.

## Completed contracts:

- Bus drivers – 2½ percent raise.
- Classified supervisors – 2½ percent raise.
- Cabinet level administrators – 2½ percent raise.
- Confidential secretaries – 7 percent raise.
- Superintendent – did not seek raise.
- Administrators at the site level – five-year contract that goes through 2016. No salary increase. Four more paid days were added to the contract. Pay could be increased based on performance, which is mandated by the Legislature.

The teachers are the last to settle. And that may not happen until the start of next school year because an arbitrator will settle the dispute between teachers and the district. Arbitration is set for June 16, 17, 18, 23 and 24. It could be a month after that before a decision is made.

Salary is the main sticking point. But it has not been made public how far apart the two sides are.

The district offered fact finding where an independent third party would go over numbers and help resolve the dispute. The district also proposed mediation. The Douglas County Professional Education Association chose to go straight to arbitration from impasse.

Brian Rippet, president of DCPEA, did not respond to questions.

Teachers have not had a raise for more than four years. However, those who have qualified still receive their step and ladder increases. These are automatic bumps in pay based on years of service and education levels.

Superintendent Lisa Noonan told *Lake Tahoe News* she is not allowed to talk specifics about the negotiations.

She said Assistant Superintendent Rich Alexander, CFO Holly Luna and often a principal are the district's representatives at the bargaining table.

#### **In other news:**

- The district is not issuing any pink slips this year; mostly because enrollment is stable. There is expected to be at least one teacher retirement at the lake.
- *U.S. News & World Report* ranked Whittell High School as No. 810 for best high school in the U.S. , and No. 2 in the state.
- Noonan does not anticipate additional personnel resources being brought in at Whittell, despite the seventh- and eighth-grade test scores being lackluster and the principal's request for more help. She questions whether the four-day school day is appropriate for this age group.
- The board is having another special meeting May 9 at 3pm at

Carson Valley Middle School regarding the strategic plan.