

LTUSD-LTCC seek seamless transition



LTUSD and LTCC board members meet March 24 for the second consecutive year. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

Education and life post high school graduation are becoming less distinct transitions in South Lake Tahoe.

Instead of the solid lines between grade levels and physical entities, the powers that be are on a quest to make it a seamless transition. Lake Tahoe Unified and Lake Tahoe Community College are trying to blur the lines between the academic institutions.

This will be accomplished in several ways. Part is through a dual enrollment program that was unveiled Tuesday night to LTUSD and LTCC board members. This was the second joint meeting of the two elected boards.

The goal is to develop a memorandum of understanding that would have a South Tahoe High School teacher teaching a college-level course. The dual enrollment concept has been around since 1974. Today 60 high schools in California participate in dual enrollment.

LTUSD Assistant Superintendent Ivone Larson and LTCC Dean of CTE & Instruction Virginia Boyar jointly presented the idea to the elected officials March 24.

Dual enrollment allows high school students to get a head start on college credits.

Still to be determined is what the cost, if any, of these classes will be for STHS students. No matter what, LTCC will be able to count them as students, which allows the college to get financial reimbursement from the state.

“Dual enrollment offers high school students the opportunity to complete college level courses while still attending high school,” the staff report said. “These college courses can occur at the college, on the high school campus, or online. Courses that are completed through dual enrollment appear on both the students’ high school and college transcripts.”

Up to 30 semester units may be obtained.

Complementing this will be the Get Focused Stay Focused Initiative. This two-year pilot program that ends in December 2016 involves seven community colleges in the greater Sacramento area, including LTCC.

It will start this fall with the incoming freshmen class, with the pilot program ending after the first semester of their sophomore year.

The goal is to get students to think about their future and not just be in the moment. Flexibility is built in so teens can change their minds about what they want to do in the future. It’s not all about having a college degree be the end goal, but instead about having a plan for their lives.

The semester-long class is designed to get students to have realistic discussions regarding the realities of life. It means if their goal is to live in Glenbrook and they want a

job in retail, then one of those goals needs to change. They will be taught about economic realities, what to do to achieve dreams, and know that college does not have to be the answer.

“There is a pathway for everyone,” Boyar said.

Students will develop a 10-year education and career plan.

An advisory committee will be put together between LTUSD and LTCC officials to solidify the plan.

What high schools that have the Get Focused Stay Focused Initiative have found is that students are more engaged, not as many kids drop out, and graduation rates increase. Colleges like that students arrive with a plan of study, need fewer remedial courses and are focused on a goal.