

LTUSD working hard on STHS accreditation

By Kathryn Reed

“The problem with the status is something we are taking very seriously.”

Those are the words of Bob Grant about accreditation at South Tahoe High School. Grant is essentially second in charge of Lake Tahoe Unified School District,

The district office and staff at STHS are focusing much of their attention on getting the school off probationary status and to be accredited without any blemishes.

The board received an update on accreditation on March 28, nearly two months after the district found out the appeal had been denied.

Only one parent was in the audience. He sat there for hours, then was told because he didn't fill out a form to talk he would not be allowed to do so.

Officials from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges will be back next school year to make another report. They could remove the probation, add another year to the two-year probation or withhold accreditation.

It was about a year ago that STHS learned it received the two-year probationary accreditation. The district believes there were procedural flaws involving the visiting committee. That is what the appeal was based on.

It was stressed that the probationary status has no impact on colleges at this point because STHS is still fully accredited.

It will not be a full assessment this next go-round. Instead

the review team will analyze whether the district has made strides to improve upon the weaknesses that were identified by the WASC group as well as what the school said needed addressing.

Grant said it is important to figure out why something wasn't being done or wasn't working and then work on how to fix the problem.

To monitor things locally, a task force has been put together of staff, administrators, parents and students.

"They said we didn't have enough data," Grant said. "We need to create tests to gather data."

With Common Core being the rule of the land these days, students are only tested by the state as juniors.

Teachers at STHS are working collaboratively to design tests so all students in Common Core classes are judged in the same way.

When it comes to accountability, live pacing guides are going to become the norm. This is to ensure teachers of the same subject are at the same place throughout the semester so it's easy to tell the standards have been taught.

Board member Angela Swanson asked if the probationary status would limit the pool of principal candidates. The answer was no. Chad Houck has the job until the end of the school year. The thinking is that the pieces will be in place for the start of the next school year so a new principal can step in and take over the leadership and see the accreditation process to a better outcome.