

Opinion: LTUSD board celebrates student successes

By Troy Matthews and Barbara Bannar

It is that time of year again. It is time for the youth in our beautiful community to take the big plunge. We, the members of the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board of education, wish to congratulate each and every member of South Tahoe High School and Mount Tallac High School class of 2017 for all their hard work, not just for the last four years, but for the last 12. We are deeply proud of our seniors, and we hope that moving forward you never forget the closeness and care of a community like South Lake Tahoe.

If your path leads you to stay here at the lake, or pursue your dreams elsewhere, never forget your mountain roots. We wish you all the best and are cheering for your every success. As a unified school district, we are charged with full primary and secondary education for all our students; we also celebrate the tremendous accomplishments of our eighth grade class, and welcome you to your next chapter at South Tahoe High.

There are so many exciting things happening at our schools. From the beautiful choral concerts at Tahoe Valley, to the two-way bilingual immersion program at Bijou School, to the nutritional growing domes and mountain academy at Sierra House, and the excellent outdoor education programming at Lake Tahoe Environmental Science Magnet. Both South Tahoe Middle School and South Tahoe High School were once again named AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) demonstration site schools, a major nationwide accomplishment. South Tahoe High School's athletes had a historic year. Performing arts is also thriving at the middle school and high school with amazing plays and concerts produced each year with tremendously gifted

performers.

Recently, South Tahoe High School's photography students received statewide awards in the CTE California Streaming Photo awards, of which STHS students took two out three statewide awards, and CSU California Through My Eyes Photography awards, of which STHS students took four out of five statewide awards. Just an incredible accomplishment. Our community has so much to be proud of from all of our students.

The board wishes to extend a sincere welcome to the new STHS principal, Carline Sinkler. Sinkler comes to us from Herbert Hoover Middle School in San Francisco. There, she led over 85 staff members, collectively engaging and enriching the lives of 1,000 students from a variety of linguistic, economic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The school is highly complex as it serves students in two language immersion programs, three performing arts programs, the first STEAM program in SFUSD, AVID Excel, and AVID.

Some of Sinkler's recent career highlights include ACSA Region 5's administrator of the year, San Francisco mayor's principal of the year, SFUSD innovation award (cultivating a culture of creative confidence through design thinking), and SFUSD impact award (increasing outcomes for English language learners). We also wish to thank Chad Houck for his passionate dedication to our students, and wish him all the best in his new endeavor. He will be missed.

Though we as school board members love to celebrate the successes of our schools, we will not ignore our challenges as well. We are continually striving to increase student academic achievement at all of our schools, and we understand we have more work to do. The mental health and wellness of our students will always remain a top priority as we address the often harsh challenges and pressures facing our youth from external sources, including the media and online bullying. We will continue to provide every opportunity for educational

success for every single student, regardless of familial income, language, and immigration status.

The probationary status of STHS's WASC accreditation took everyone by surprise; we understand and appreciate the concern of the community. In order to give this matter the full attention it deserves, we will dedicate an entire future article to the WASC process and the work that is currently being done to resolve the situation. The district also has a dedicated informational web page on the WASC renewal process at www.LTUSD.org/District. The site is interactive, and members of the community can submit questions. Stay tuned for regular written articles from the LTUSD school board on this and other matters.

We live in a breathtaking and caring community. We have incredible students, and parents, and teachers. We are honored to serve you as members of the school board. Everyone is welcome at regular open school board meetings, typically held the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month at the LTUSD education center at 1021 Al Tahoe Blvd. at 6pmm. Come by and say "hi," and let us know what is on your mind during public comment. We wish everyone a safe and fun summer.

Troy Matthews and Barbara Bannar are on the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board of education.