

THE ADVOCATE

We stood up for them
in November.



John Evans



Shelia Jackson



Richard Barrera

Will they stand
up for us today?

See story, page 4

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MAYHEM: TERRY GRIER

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■ A SEA OF RED ON
PINK FRIDAY

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FEATURES

THE ADVOCATE

SDEA MEMBERS JOIN STATEWIDE BUDGET PROTESTS

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On March 13, teachers across the Golden State joined together in a "Pink Friday" protest against teacher layoffs. SDEA members wore their red shirts to remind the Board to keep their promise: no layoffs!

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MEETING OF THE MINDS

Kimbrough Elementary shares their organizing victory in ending superfluous meetings.

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It is time to hold out Board accountable. Do they earn an "effective" rating?

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With great sorrow, SDEA honors the passing of Mona Ohlin, Dena Endo and Don Morrison.

ADVOCATE COLUMNS

Online

This month, the Advocate's **NEA**, **CTA**, **SDEA-R** and **VEBA** columns may be viewed by visiting the SDEA website: www.sdea.net.

DEPARTMENTS

THE ADVOCATE

Cover: Trustees John Evans, Shelia Jackson and Richard Barrera and ran on a platform of accountability and change. SDEA is sad to say that we await evidence of either. See story, page 4.

SDEA President Camille Zombro Site Visit Log

Working directly with SDEA members and sites is the most important work of SDEA leadership. Each month we will include a list of the schools visited by SDEA President Camille Zombro. **To schedule a site visit, email Camille at zombro_c@sdea.net.**

March

- | | |
|--|--|
| 3 North Park El. | 16 Field El. |
| 4 Farb MS | 17 E. B. Scripps El., Mann MS and Edison El. |
| 6 Sequoia El. | 18 Adams El. and Audubon |
| 9 Torrey Pines El. | 23 Mission Bay HS |
| 10 Curie El. and Farb MS | 24 Marston MS and Hoover |
| 11 Zamorano El. (with Shelia Jackson) and Penn El. | 25 Balboa El. and Bell MS |
| 12 Visiting Teachers | 26 Carson El. |
| 13 Tubman Village Charter and E. B. Scripps El. | 27 Perkins El., Chavez El. and Linda Vista El. |

April

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Jefferson El., Ross El. and Hoover HS | Serra HS |
| 2 Memorial Charter Academy | 21 Hearst El. and Memorial Charter Academy |
| 15 Crown Point El. and | 23 Muirlands MS |
| | 28 Foster El. |

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**SDEA Mission Statement
2008-2009**

The members of SDEA are dedicated to providing a quality public education. As a professional union advocating the interests of certificated staff, students and the community, SDEA/CTA/NEA will implement its membership commitment through involvement in politics, building coalitions, negotiations and grievance advocacy and educational programs.



Letters in Solidarity

Camille Zombro
SDEA President



Marc Capitelli
SDEA Vice President

Is SDUSD being Grier-ended?

SDEA Members—

By now all of us have heard about the District's proposed budget (including the innocuously titled "Plan A" and "Plan B").

"Plan A" seeks deep concessions from unions that would hurt our families and diminish our ability to meet students' needs. "Plan B" was crafted in the event that unions do not agree to draconian concessions (and make no mistake — we are not about to roll over and give up our health care). Plan B includes cutting most of the programs and services our parents value most, which would, of course, be portrayed as the terrible teachers' union's fault.

Neither plan is tenable, nor do these two plans constitute the only methods by which the School Board can steer our District through this tumultuous budgetary period. Nonetheless, our newly elected "pro-union" board members are behaving precisely as though these things are true — presumably because the District officials upon whom they rely for budgetary information and recommendations are telling them that they have no other options.

The School Board, the teachers and the community are being told that the only way for the District to survive this financial crisis is to choose between gouging out our left eye or our right, despite the fact there remain many unexplored budgetary options at the District's disposal. Perhaps while we still have the benefit of full sight, we would do well to examine the source of this information. We have begun to suspect that there is a man behind the curtain — and he is no well-intentioned magician.

We posit that Superintendent Terry Grier is responsible for the conflict and confusion surrounding the District's budget. We know his agenda by his actions, and because it is consistent with his pattern of behavior in several other school districts where he has worked. We need to look at the things Grier has done in SDUSD, and at the actions he has convinced the School Board to take. Knowing where he wants to go and how he plans to get there is critical to preventing Grier from dividing our union or hurting our members, our students, and our school community. Grier knows that teachers will not accept Plan A. He also knows that parents will not accept Plan B. What, then, is his true plan?

Grier's Plan C

Step 1: Divide the Opposition!

- Convince parents and the public that the unions are to blame if art, music, athletics, small schools and other valued programs are cut.
- Craft employer bargaining proposals that pit employee groups against each other (Kaiser vs. PacificCare, SERP vs. RIF, K-3 classes vs. 4-12).
- Tell the press, public and other unions that SDEA wants an early retirement plan at the expense of all other employees (*not true!*).

Step 2: Spin, Misconstrue, and...!

- Manipulate the budget numbers and other information to convince the School Board that layoffs are necessary.
- Tell the newspaper that unions were offered a salary rollback in exchange for rolling back 2008 layoffs, but that we refused (*never happened*).

Step 3: Possibly Bankrupt the District in Order to Destroy the Unions?

- Create several new and unsustainable programs which thin resources during tight budget times.
- Force the School Board to pass a budget calling for deep union concessions and get your friend Randy Ward (County Superintendent) to threaten them if they do not pass it.
- Create a nonsensical class size reduction plan (15:1 in K-3 pilot and 20:1 in 9th grade English) that obliges teachers to oppose its implementation.
- Ultimately guide the District into a state receivership, thereby nullifying the union contracts? After all, Grier has made it clear that he considers the teacher and classified unions to be little more than inconvenient obstacles to achieving his plans.
- And lest we forget... **do it all under the banner of "For the Students."**

This is not a game that Grier is playing, and despite promises to the contrary, the Board appears unwilling to stand up for us. We need to stand up for ourselves, and we need to do it now.

In Solidarity,

Camille Zombro

Camille Zombro
SDEA President

Marc Capitelli

Marc Capitelli
SDEA Vice President

New school board. Same old tactics.

Over five months have passed since the November School Board election and the seating of a new Board majority. Many promises were made, as is the case in any political campaign, but the main promise of this School Board was a fundamental change in the way decisions are made in SDUSD. SDEA believed those promises, and we worked hard to elect three trustees who promised to serve the best interests of our students by honoring the dedication and hard work of our teachers. How are they doing?

Look at their promises and at what has been delivered and decide for yourself:

Promise #1: No Teacher Layoffs

After rescinding the 2008 layoffs in December, the Board has taken several steps which appear to indicate pending layoffs, including a request to push the probationary teacher layoff notification deadline to May 15, but no significant cuts are planned for top administrators. We are all looking to April 15 to see if our probationary sisters and brothers will receive layoff notices.

"I believe this budget was balanced the wrong way last year. What we're doing right now is correcting a mistake the prior board made. We're doing it not because it's nice, but because it's fair." —Richard Barrera

Promise #2: End Secret Decision-Making

Since the November election, there have been many different ways that our union has found out about Board (and Grier) decisions. These circuitous communication methods include newspapers, parents, administrators and other sources. SDEA was

forced to learn indirectly about the SERP, "Plans A and B," Grier's class size reduction experiment and the Code of Ethics. Will the School Board now keep their promise to be open and transparent?

"We can only begin to accomplish all of this with a truly democratic process that includes all of us: parents, teachers and support personnel, students, local employers and the general community. We can do this in an open and transparent manner. All of our meetings and decision-making must reflect this." —John Lee Evans

Promise #3: Create an Atmosphere of Trust and Respect

The School Board and Grier have proposed cutting union members' pay and healthcare, increasing class sizes and shortening the work year by removing paid teacher prep days. In doing so, they are attempting to pit the interests of parents against employees and our families, all amid serious charges of Unfair Labor Practices for "Bad Faith Bargaining" (filed by SDEA in December).

"Our first task is to create a new atmosphere of trust and respect for the teachers and the other support personnel who work with our children. We need to recruit and retain the best and brightest for San Diego." —John Lee Evans

"I would like to thank our Superintendent Terry Grier for his leadership of our district." —Shelia Jackson

Bottom line: The Board has promised change, but no significant change has resulted from the new majority.

Kimbrough Elementary gets organized!

by MARION SNELL
SDEA Member

Don't get me wrong, I like our principal, but sometimes the meetings get to us. This year, these meetings include weekly Wednesday staff development that ends *formally* at our release time, *but* we are asked to continue working until our grade level is "finished." This is in addition to weekly Monday staff meetings that seem to run on and on.

Our Association Representative Elida Melendez called SDEA and asked SDEA President Camille Zombro to come out and help us organize to address the problem. About half of our staff attended an impromptu meeting that Wednesday, and together with Camille we came up with a plan. SDEA staff supplied copies of the Weingarten Rule and the Reasonable Meetings Memorandum of Understanding, and they went into everybody's boxes on Friday morning. Elida and I conducted informal trainings during lunch on Friday,



photo courtesy of Marion Snell

Kimbrough exemplifies the SDEA motto: "Together, we are stronger!"

and many staff who do not usually eat lunch in the lounge came. Our principal walked in when I was in the middle of a presentation, handed out some books to fifth grade teachers, and left.

Since then, all Monday staff meetings and Wednesday professional development have been cancelled on a week by week basis — a real victory! In the meantime,

Elida arranged for Richard Barrera, our School Board Trustee, to hold a meeting with the staff on a Friday afternoon after school. Again about half of the staff stayed until 4:30 on a Friday to share our concerns.

As new concerns arise (and now it is lesson studies), we discuss them and work out appropriate actions that we all can support. It is good to be organized.

Seeing RED Thinking PINK



photo courtesy of Michele Janette

Benchley Weinberger Elementary: March 13.

On March 13, our CTA sisters and brothers across California set aside a day to protest school budget cuts and to stand up for students. With tens of thousands of projected layoffs, this is a critical and painful time for our profession. In Los Angeles Unified alone, roughly 6,000 educators received layoff notices this year.

Here in San Diego, SDEA members joined with our colleagues across the county in wearing pink or suiting up in our red “Together We are Stronger” t-shirts to show our solidarity in the days before and on March 13. Layoffs in San Diego are complicated by the Board’s meandering priorities and broken promises.

The battle continues. Urban districts across the state are planning coordinated actions on May 13, California’s Day of the Teacher. All SDEA members are asked to stay informed, get involved, and stand up for our students and our members.



photo courtesy of Mark Frerichs

Patrick Henry High School: March 2.



photo courtesy of Carolyn Vega

Hardy Elementary: March 13.



photo courtesy of Claudia Weimer

Bayview Terrace Elementary: March 13.



photo courtesy of Mark Guffey

Rodriguez Elementary: March 13.

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In Loving Memory

Mona Ohlin



Mona Ohlin passed away on March 7 after a valiant struggle against cancer. Mona spent most of her thirty-three year career at Sherman Elementary School, teaching first, second and third grade. She retired in 2003.

Mona was a fantastic teacher who was very kind and friendly to her students, their parents and her colleagues. Besides her work in the classroom, Mona was a tireless advocate for quality education for all students. Although she was small in stature, Mona

was a giant when she stood up to administrators, superintendents, school board members, politicians and anyone else that she felt was standing in the way of excellence.

Mona also was an activist. She was active with the Catholic Workers and other organizations in feeding and clothing the homeless and in constantly helping others. Virtually everyone whose lives she touched loved Mona.

Photo and memorial courtesy Terry Pesta

Dena Endo

The staff of Bird Rock Elementary School is sad to report the death of teacher Dena Endo, age 32. Dena was a remarkable teacher who taught at our site for seven years. She was a native San Diegan, and was a graduate of Madison High School and San Diego State University. She will be deeply missed by her colleagues, students and Bird Rock families.

Photo and memorial courtesy Lori Van Orden



Don Morrison

On March 21, former SDEA President Don Morrison passed away. Don was President of SDTA from 1964-1966, and served as the only President of NEA from California (1971-72). Services will be held on Saturday, April 18 at the First Unitarian Church. At the request of Don's wife, Geraldine, SDEA will establish a scholarship in Don's memory.

Memorial courtesy Camille Zombro

<http://www.sdea.net>

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