

THE ADVOCATE

Can you hear us now? Good.



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THE ADVOCATE

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FIFTEEN TOO MANY

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A SUCCESS AT PBMS

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GETTING DISCIPLINED

Educators at PBMS get organized around a site discipline plan.

Cover and Table of Contents: Wrapping up a year of organizing efforts, educators gathered after the final day of school to present a giant petition bearing the names of nearly 5,000 teachers to School Board President Shelia Jackson. See page 4.



photos by Nanette Najera and Erin Clark

LEADERSHIP LETTER

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BUILDING ON OUR STRENGTHS

After a hard-fought year of bargaining, SDEA is ready for action.

ADVOCATE COLUMNS

Online

This month, The Advocate's columns may be viewed by visiting our new website at www.sdea.net.

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SDEA Mission Statement

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

New year brings new challenges

Over the past 15 months, our bargaining campaign has been met by the District's stall tactics followed by hostile attempts to wrench take-backs from our families and our schools. But as SDEA members open the school year, our patience and collective actions have brought us through the worst financial crisis in generations with **NO layoffs, NO furlough days, NO salary cuts, and NO changes in healthcare!**

Let's be clear about why we were able to avoid these take-backs. It was not because of the generosity of our School Board and Superintendent (though Trustees Barrera, Evans and Jackson certainly deserve credit for their efforts). We succeeded because we were patient, we stood together, and we refused to bend to political pressure to take unnecessary concessions. But the spike in class sizes in our elementary schools, massive transfers, continuing changes to curricular programs, and over 15 months of bargaining make it clear that we have so much more to do in the year ahead. We are more than 8,000 strong, but we will only be as successful as the involvement of our members.

We have learned that when we speak in a collective voice, we are heard. Throughout the past year, sites across SDUSD have taken on the bargaining campaign as their own, planning and carrying out their own actions to ensure that the School Board and Superintendent felt the pressure to settle a fair contract from all levels. Mission Bay High School staff sent over 70 post cards to Trustee Jackson. Staff at Zamorano Elementary walked out promptly at the end of the school day to emphasize the amount of work that teachers do every day for their students (see the "Victories" page of the SDEA web site for details). Staff at Lindbergh-Schweitzer, Baker, Chollas-Mead, Spreckels, Toler, Zamorano, Chavez, and Kimbrough met with School Board members to articulate our bargaining priorities. And sites across the District responded to their own issues through collective actions owned by the whole staff. In just one example, Pacific Beach Middle School demonstrated how to take on their problems with pupil discipline by working together toward tangible solutions (see page 4).

In an example of District-wide organizing, in June SDEA ARs and CRs collected almost 5,000

signatures in just two weeks for our "Petition to Save Our Schools" (see page 4). While union-wide actions like this demonstrate the power of our membership as a whole, if the power we have built is going to last it must be meaningful in the day-to-day lives of SDEA members. Reaching the contract settlement all SDEA members deserve requires our continued commitment to both site and District organizing.

June also marked the beginning of a new era, as the SDEA Representative Council approved our new affiliation with the San Diego Labor Council and the AFL-CIO. This past year, our fellow union leaders have already helped us convince the School Board not to declare impasse in bargaining, and facilitated a critical conversation with Congresswoman Susan Davis about the damaging proposals being pushed by U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

We should be proud of what we have achieved for our students. Our SDEA bargaining campaign started with thousands of conversations about **What it Takes** to do our work. Our goals are clear, but critical bargaining issues remain unresolved. As we prepare for another successful school year, we face new challenges and opportunities. We must resolve to do what it takes to protect our schools and our profession from an increasingly hostile political environment. With more change in District leadership on the horizon, there are plenty of opportunities for us to work together and to build a better future.

The summer was also a productive time at the SDEA office. We launched a new web site, and hired two former teachers as Contract Specialists. Our Field Organizers are redirecting their work toward site-based organizing, our training program is getting an overhaul, and new systems to track membership and grievance documents will soon be implemented.

As we begin the 2009-2010 school year, we must remember that unions exist to give people a voice at work. What we have to say — about our future, the future of our schools, and what it takes to succeed — must be paired with a renewed commitment to organizing to make those changes last. Together we are stronger!

Camille Zombro

Camille Zombro
SDEA President

Marc Capitelli

Marc Capitelli
SDEA Vice President

SDEA presents 100-yard petition to Board

Only one day after bidding farewell to the students for the summer, hundreds of SDEA educators gathered before the Education Center to present what was possibly the longest petition in District history to Board President Shelia Jackson. Bearing nearly 5,000 signatures collected in the space of two weeks, the Petition to Save Our Schools was roughly the length of a football field. At Jackson's behest, SDEA members convened again the following week to present the petition to the entire school board, reminding our elected representatives that we are watching closely as they govern one of the nation's largest urban districts.

Petition to Save Our Schools

Dear School Board President Shelia Jackson,

We, the undersigned members of the San Diego Education Association, **pledge our support** for any and all Board of Education actions taken on behalf of the children, teachers and staff of the District to restore our confidence and trust in the administration of SDUSD.

San Diego's educators chose public education as a career to contribute to the future of our community's children. We readily accept the challenges of working in public schools, and we stand prepared to work with you through the current economic crisis and other challenges before us.

But in the past year, we have witnessed a return to the environment of fear, hostility and divisiveness that characterized past years within SDUSD. This environment can only serve to impede the progress we are making with our students, while deepening the challenges before us. We cannot stand by while another top-down administration makes decisions which damage

our schools, limit our ability to serve our students, and ultimately place the future of our District in jeopardy.

We call on you, as the leader of the SDUSD Board Education, to do everything in your power to reverse the current negative trajectory of the District, and restore us again to a place where honesty, openness and fairness are valued in words and in action.

Sincerely,

Thousands of SDEA Members!



photo by Erin Clark

For more photos from the petition action, visit the new multimedia gallery at www.sdea.net.

At PBMS, discipline is matter of organization

by KIM OLIVER-VACHA
Pacific Beach Middle School

If your school is like mine, generally the kids do a good job... until after testing, and then *they* start testing *us*. At Pacific Beach Middle School, the staff was becoming concerned with discipline, so we decided to organize around the issue.

We started by having a site meeting with a focus on discipline. Two contract specialists from the SDEA office came by to give us all the contract language on discipline, and as a staff we shared our concerns about what was and was not happening around campus. Section 11.7 of the contract is about pupil discipline, and says that each

site should have a plan that is reviewed annually. After reviewing our plan, our staff felt it needed updating.

The AR met with the principal to let her know the staff's concerns and within a week, a discipline committee was formed from all staff members who wanted to be on it, as well as administration. The committee worked to tighten up the language of the school discipline plan and make recommendations to the staff on some common issues. A new plan was written by administration and resubmitted to the committee for any additional changes. Among other things the committee decided that:

1. All adults are empowered

to enforce school rules; 2. Staff should share what works with other colleagues; and 3. Routines and procedures need to be in place the first week of school.

By organizing together, PBMS created the following top ten list of routines and procedures teachers should have in place (note: order of routines is not hierarchical):

10. Testing
9. Walking to and from assemblies
8. Fire drill/emergencies
7. Absences/missed work
6. Sharpening pencils
5. Tardies
4. Respect for substitutes
3. Turning in assignments
2. Bathroom breaks

1. Entering/exiting class

Every site's discipline will look different — this is simply what works for us. The moral of the story is *together, we are stronger*. What's amazing about the staff at PBMS is that we did not wait until things were unbearable at our school, or sit around complaining that nobody was doing anything about the situation. We got organized and we took action. Teachers, counselors and nurses collaborated, along with SDEA and administration, to make a plan where no one was left out of the conversation. With a committee in place, and recommendations from the whole staff, PBMS is expecting a fabulous school year.



Local

Declaration of Candidacy

2009 Fall Online Special Election

Please note:

If you are interested in a position, this form needs to be returned to the SDEA office NO LATER THAN 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, October 21, 2009. Nominations for the 2009 Fall Special Election will be taken at the October 21, 2009 Rep. Council Meeting. Please refer to the election procedures or call SDEA at (619) 283-4411 if you have questions.

Candidate statement forms are available at SDEA and on the SDEA website (www.sdea.net), and will be printed in the October 2009 issue of The Advocate. Statements are limited to 250 words for Officers and 25 words for CTA State Council candidates. Candidate statement forms must be returned to SDEA by October 23, 2009. Please email your statement to Moreno_L@sdea.net.

Name: _____

Site: _____ Site Phone # _____

E-mail: _____

I am a candidate for: _____

Position(s) available are as follows:

For the Election of

SDEA Officers

Secretary – Partial, 1-year term (2009-July 2010)

Treasurer – Partial, 1-year term (2009-July 2010)

CTA State Council Delegates seat(s):

10 – Partial, 2-year term (2009 – June 2011)

13 – (2009 – June 2012)

17 – Partial, 2-year term (2009– June 2011)

19 – Partial, 1-year term (2009 – June 2010)

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Degrees and Credentials

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GRADUATE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Education (MAE) Emphases:

- Curriculum & Instruction
- Educational Leadership and Administration
- Instructional Technology
- Professional Learning Community
- Reading
- School Counseling (MA), PPS Credential
- School Psychology (Ed.S.)/ Educational Psychology (MA), PPS Credential
- Teaching (MAT): Elementary, Secondary, Special Education
- Special Education (MA) Professional Learning Community

EDUCATION CREDENTIAL AND CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

- Multiple Subject
- Single Subject
- Special Education (Levels I & II)
- Preliminary (Tier I) and Professional (Tier II) Administrative Services
- Professional Reading Certificate
- Ryan Professional Clear



— **Next session starts October 26** —



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Timelines for 2009 SDEA Fall Online Special Election

For the election of:

SDEA Officers:

Secretary – Partial, 1-year term
(2009-July 2010)

Treasurer – Partial, 1-year term
(2009-July 2010)

CTA State Council Delegates seat(s):

10 – Partial, 2-year term
(2009 – June 2011)

13 - (2009 – June 2012)

17 – Partial, 2-year term
(2009– June 2011)

19 – Partial, 1-year term
(2009 – June 2010)

- **Deadline for Nomination (Rep. Council) — October 21**
- **Deadline for Campaign Statements and Fliers (300) — October 23**
- **Election — November 5-18**
- **Deadline to cast ballot (online or mail no later than 5:00 pm) — November 18 (*receipt)**
- **SDEA Ballots online and/or paper counted by election vendor — November 18-22**
- **Election Committee verifies election results — November 23**
- **Candidates notified of results — by November 23**

For additional information, contact SDEA.

Online Special Edition: Advocate Columnists

Race to the top, or race to disaster? New White House plan hurts students, teachers

Although no new education laws have been passed this summer, lots of changes are occurring. Passage of the economic stimulus package created a \$4.3 billion fund called Race to the Top. The Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, gets to decide how this money is distributed. Duncan is changing education policy without Congress enacting law. The intent is to make a big impact in ten states by forcing those states to make major educational changes in order to get these dollars. Many states are hastily enacting changes to their state laws in order to qualify to apply for the Race to the Top Funds. What changes are required?

To qualify for these monies, there must be data systems in place to link student performance to teachers. Since the data the state collects is test scores, this is opening the door to merit pay on a national level. Another requirement is that there is no limit to the number of charter schools. Secretary Duncan appears to be wearing rose-colored glasses when he looks at charter schools. The data out there doesn't support this. In approximately 50 percent of the charter schools, there is no difference in student outcomes compared to public schools and fewer than 20 percent of charter schools have student results that are better than their local public schools. That also means that about 30 percent of the charter

schools have worse student outcomes than in public schools. The data just does not support charter schools as the panacea for public education.

The regulations also require changes in teacher certification and credentialing. Whether or not we are one of the states selected, expect changes to our standards and assessments. There is a movement to create common international standards and nearly every state has bought into joining this movement. That means new standards, new assessments and redoing all your hard work on teaching California Standards.

Where are the classroom teachers' experiences in this mess: look in the mirror. Get on the phone, get on the internet or get in your car and drive to a local legislator's office. Let them know that we should not sell out, that we are doing good work.

Elizabeth Ahlgren may be contacted via email at elizahlgren@yahoo.com.



Wear out rather than rest out, SDEA-R!

And the commitment goes on...

This summer I had the good fortune to attend the 2009 NEA-Retired Annual Meeting held here in San Diego for the very first time, along with the NEA convention. The theme for the meeting was "NEA-Retired Annual Meeting -Our Commitment Continues." I was very inspired during this three-day conference by several things.

First, I was inspired by the 400-plus, dedicated retirees who traveled from all over the United States to continue involvement in their national, professional organization. Many were physically challenged, but came anyway.

Second, I was inspired by the keynote speaker, Dr. Adolph Brown, III, a recognized master teacher and a trained anthropologist and clinical psychologist. He declared he owes who he is now (professor and college dean) to educators who would not allow him to be an "at risk" student. He reaffirmed the need for retirees to remain involved and mentor younger teachers, especially in classroom management. He reaffirmed retirees' value to the education profession by quoting his grandfather with quips like "When things go wrong, you don't have to go with it," and "Educators have a mission that has no finish lines." SDEA-R's motto is "Lifetime learners... Lifetime professionals."

Third, I was inspired by the recipient of the NEA-Retired Distinguished Service Award. Her name is Agnes Chavis (from

North Carolina), who has been an advocate for teachers and students and a strong union member for more than 60 years.

She is not finished yet! At the Annual Meeting, Agnes ran for the NEA Resolutions Committee and was elected. Agnes, who is 83 years young, got my attention with the following quote: "Better to wear out than to rest out."

I challenge all SDEA-R members to "wear out rather than rest out," even if each of us only does one small thing to continue our commitment to our profession.

Together we continue. Together we can.

Did You Know: That the SDUSD was going to impose a two percent service fee on retiree benefits and that SDEA-R worked with SDEA to get this fee rescinded? If you were charged the fee in July, you should have received a credit in August. If you did not, contact the district benefits office right away and notify me also at 858-485-9888 or heet2@san.rr.com.

Needed: Volunteers to label and stuff The Advocate once a month on Fridays after Rep Council, usually mid-month. Please contact Gayle Lopes at Wldftwr008@aol.com or 619-697-4524.



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Check out our new website!

The screenshot shows the homepage of the San Diego Education Association website. At the top, the logo reads "San Diego Education Association" with the tagline "Together We Are Stronger!". Below the logo is a search bar and a navigation menu with links for Home, Contact, News, Calendar, AR's Corner, and Logout. A secondary navigation bar includes links for About SDEA, Membership, My Worksite, Organizing, Our Rights At Work, Victories, and Multimedia Gallery. The main content area features three articles:

- SDEA Presents 100-Yard Petition to School Board**: Posted on Jul 30, 2009. The article describes a petition drive where hundreds of educators gathered to present a petition to the School Board. A "Read full story" link is provided.
- SDEA Strong Sites Launch**: Posted on Jul 27, 2009. The article discusses the launch of the Strong Site Program. A "Read full story" link is provided.
- Day of the Teacher**: Posted on Jul 27, 2009. The article celebrates the Day of the Teacher. A "Read full story" link is provided.

Other featured content includes a "NEXT ACTION! EVENT" for the "Fall Leadership Conference" on October 3rd, with links for "More event details" and "See full calendar", and a "TAKE ACTION!" section about bargaining with the board, including a "Contact Your Board Member" link.

Left: Make sure you check out the newly re-launched SDEA website. Same URL, completely different experience! Visit www.sdea.net.



Speak up, SDEA!

The new school year brings new opportunities to share ideas with your fellow SDEA members through The Advocate. We encourage letters to the editor. Submissions should be emailed to Editor Erin Clark at advocate@sdea.net. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. Publication is subject to space constraints.

Advocate questions, comments and submissions may be directed to advocate@sdea.net.