

# THE ADVOCATE

SAN DIEGO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

## UNION ACADEMY 2019

—BUILDING POWER TO WIN!—

Union Academy began last year as a full day leadership conference and training for site and program leaders across SDEA.

As we move into the 2019-2020 school year, the stakes are even higher as union members are building power to bargain a contract, prevent charter advocates from winning seats on the School Board, and fighting to pass a major school and community funding initiative.

To build our union we must have member leaders and strong structures in every school and program. Union Academy is a big part of the work to build an SDEA powerful enough to fight and win the schools our students deserve, and this year's event was a big success with 189 member leaders from sites and programs across the district in attendance. UTLA President Alex Caputo-Pearl spoke about the work Los Angeles union members did to build

their union, win their strike, and change the public education narrative in our state.

Author and organizer Jane McAlevy gave a powerful training on “whole worker organizing” and building our power not just at schools but also in the community.

SDEA President Kisha Borden laid out a clear vision to win the schools our students deserve by building our union, electing a pro-public education school board, winning much needed school funding, and bargaining a great contract that improves our working conditions and our students learning conditions.

We learned key skills around enforcing our contract, Special Education advocacy, site organizing, and more. We left Union Academy a more united and powerful union. We are fired up and ready to go!



**SDEA Board Member Kyle Weinberg leads a training session on using the grievance process to enforce our contractual rights and protect services to students with IEPs.**

## DISTRICT AGAIN UNDERSTAFFS SPECIAL ED

Just as hard-fought mild/moderate Education Specialist staffing increases and caseload caps are phased in, the District is at it again.

Under Superintendent Cindy Marten's leadership, San Diego Unified is again understaffing special ed. Dozens of vacant paraeducator positions are going unfilled. On top of that, 162 paraeducators are being transferred from one school to another. At schools that have lost or are slated to lose paraeducators, Education Specialists widely report that the loss means they may no longer be able to meet IEP service hour requirements for students, or shortages in service hours will be exacerbated.

Union members of both SDEA and CSEA (the paraeducators' union) came out to the Oct. 15 school board meeting to call for the District to hire for the vacant paraeducator positions.

Sarah Harris, a Moderate/Severe Education Specialist at Golden Hill K-8, spoke at the school board meeting.

“Cutting paraeducators from the classroom leads to students' IEP hours not being met,” Harris said. “As a result, the District is not providing FAPE [Free and Appropriate Public Education].”

An Oct. 5 article in the San Diego Union-Tribune support's Harris's statement. The Union-Tribune found that last year alone, San Diego Unified paid \$2 million to settle due process cases plus up to \$610,000 to two legal firms to handle special education issues such as due process.

Another Education Specialist addressed the school board and told them what won't solve the problem: “Don't ask us to submit more schedules -- we've done it. How many hours out of compliance we are -- we've done that. Don't ask us to do more with less -- we're already doing that.”

Fixing this issue is in the hands of the superintendent and school board, and educators are calling on them to hire and train more paraeducators.

INSIDE THE  
**ADVOCATE**

ARE YOU READY TO BUILD  
SDEA POWER?  
PAGE 2

SDEA POLITICAL ACTION  
COMMITTEE  
PAGE 3



10393 SAN DIEGO MISSION ROAD  
STE. 100, SAN DIEGO, 92108  
PHONE (619) 283-4411 FAX (619) 282-7659  
WEB WWW.SDEA.NET



@SANDIEGOEDUCATIONASSOCIATION



@SDEADUCATORS

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SDEA PRESIDENT



KISHA BORDEN

SDEA VICE PRESIDENT



SCOTT MULLIN

# LETTERS IN SOLIDARITY

## *I'm Ready* TO BUILD SDEA POWER *Are You?*

As we prepare to return to bargaining, it is important to me to share the strategic plan that is being developed by SDEA member leaders and staff. It is included as an insert in this month's Advocate.

In this plan, we outline our strategy for building our power and how we intend to use that power to create the working conditions and learning conditions we and our students deserve.

Over the last couple of years, SDEA members have built a strong foundation of member engagement at our sites and in our programs. ARs and CRs recruited Contract Action Teams (CATs) and used those structures to recommit educators to our union in the face of major attacks from the Supreme Court and anti-union forces.

We then used those structures to organize to win a strong union contract and then returned to reopener bargaining where we won real improvements in wages, safety, and some of the strongest special education staffing rights in California.

Yet our schools remain drastically underfunded in the wealthiest state in the nation while we struggle daily to ensure that the District respects our contract and does the right thing for our students. We also face a charter school lobby with billionaire friends that seeks to elect anti-public education privatizers to our school board.

To overcome these challenges, we need a big and bold vision for the schools our students deserve, and we must create an SDEA that has the structures and the power to realize that vision.

As we build our union muscle, some of the exercises may be a little uncomfortable. It's this

discomfort that tells us that we are growing stronger and moving in the right direction. I'm preparing you for this because I know the challenges we face are going to require everything we've got and more.

It's going to take growing and maintaining union membership at every site and program while also dramatically increasing our political engagement, so we don't find ourselves facing a school board elected by the charter school lobby.

It's going to take rebuilding and expanding our Contract Action Teams so that they not only exist at every single site, but are transformed to include parent and community organizers that work to bring us together to win for our schools.

It's going to take real solidarity and collaboration with our sisters and brothers in Los Angeles, Oakland, Sacramento and across California as we stand together fighting to win billions in desperately needed state funding by demanding that corporations pay their fair share.

So, what's it going to take? Well, it's going to take a fight. A fight to win the schools our students deserve, and I want you to know that I am ready to fight with you, our parents, our students and with our sisters and brothers across the state. Are you ready to fight?

**Together we are stronger and together we will win!**

KISHA BORDEN  
SDEA PRESIDENT

SCOTT MULLIN  
SDEA VICE PRESIDENT

# FUNDING OUR POLITICAL STRENGTH

Most people don't enjoy talking about politics, but the reality is that politics won't stop talking about our schools.

While the SDEA contract covers issues like class size, staffing levels for support services like nurses and counselors, and adequate prep time, our ability to bargain depends on having school board members who believe in public education and politicians who will properly fund our schools.

This means educators must be willing to talk about politics and elect pro-public education school board members to support our students.

San Diego Unified elects board members in a unique way, with the top two vote getters in the subdistrict-only primary advancing to a districtwide runoff in November of even-numbered years. With nearly half a million voters living within SDUSD boundaries, school board members receive more votes than people running for Congress.

This creates an opportunity and a challenge in building a politically strong SDEA. Reaching out to half a million

voters every two years requires funding and an organized structure to talk to parents and voters about candidates who are friendly to educators and public education.

While special interests like the unregulated charter schools lobby may be able to solicit a \$100,000 donation from a billionaire, the 6,500 educators of SDEA can match their political spending by forgoing just one latte a month.

SDEA funds its political program through a general purpose county political action committee, which by law can only be spent on local non-partisan races and ballot measures. The SDEA PAC is primarily funded by voluntary contributions from SDEA members.

At last month's Union Academy, SDEA leaders started the process of building a strong PAC that can compete with the large single donations of the charter school lobby. In just an hour, more than 110 ARs, CRs and CAT leaders either started making PAC donations or increased their monthly

contribution. This increased our ability to protect our schools by nearly \$14,000 per year!

This shows that Together We Are Stronger and that we can protect our schools.



## SDEA PAC is critical for our fights ahead!

- Winning a contract that improves our working conditions and our students' learning conditions
- Electing a pro-public education School Board and keeping privatizers out of our schools
- Winning critically needed funding for our schools and communities

**I'm ALL IN TO WIN THE SCHOOLS OUR STUDENTS DESERVE!**

Bronze \$ 8/month

Silver \$ 16/month

Gold \$ 24/month

Platinum \$ 32/month

Other: \_\_\_\_\_/month

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ EMPLOYEE ID \_\_\_\_\_

SITE/PROGRAM \_\_\_\_\_ PERSONAL EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby acknowledge the following: (a) I am an employee of SDUSD; (b) I am a member of SDEA; (c) I am a U.S. citizen or permanent resident; (d) I recognize the political purpose of the PAC and the uses of contributions to the PAC; (e) I am voluntarily authorizing the payroll deductions; (f) I am not a federal contractor; (g) I am not a minor; SDEA Political Action Committee ("SDEA PAC") collects contributions and uses these funds to help elect friends of education at the local level and for legislative advocacy. SDEA PAC is a General Purpose County political action committee. Contributions are strictly voluntary and are not tax deductible, nor are they a condition of membership in SDEA, CTA, or NEA or any affiliated organization. A member may contribute more or less than the amount suggested on this form, or may decide to not make any contribution, and this will not affect her/his status, rights or benefits in SDEA or any of its affiliates. This authorization shall remain in force until canceled by written notice from SDEA or by the member who signed this authorization.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Contribute to the SDEA PAC today!**

**New Job. Fresh Start.**

**Sweet Benefits.**

Confidence, Support, Security, Protection, Access, Relief, Reliability, Preparedness

### New Hire Special Enrollment Opportunity

Whether you are a brand new CTA member starting your first job or a long-time member starting at a new district, you have a special opportunity to apply for CTA-endorsed Disability insurance and up to \$200,000 in Life insurance from Standard Insurance Company (The Standard) with no health questions asked. **How sweet is that!**

**DISABILITY INSURANCE** can help protect your paycheck if you're out of work due to an injury, illness (including mental health disorders and substance abuse), pregnancy or childbirth. **LIFE INSURANCE** provides for your loved ones in the event of your passing. You also get additional features that you can benefit from now, and in the future at no additional cost.

Offer expires 180 days from your first day on the job.

Apply Now at [standard.com/cta/newhire](http://standard.com/cta/newhire)



For costs and further details of the coverage and this enrollment opportunity, including exclusions, any reductions or limitations and the terms under which the policies may be continued in force, please contact The Standard's dedicated CTA Customer Service Department at 800.522.0406 (TTY), 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Pacific Time, Monday through Friday. Standard Insurance Company, 1100 SW Sixth Avenue, Portland, OR 97204 GP190-LTD/S399/CTA.1 GP190-LIFE/S399/CTA.3 SI 20945-CTAvol (6/19)



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**Deadline to apply: October 18, 2019.**

**20 Teacher Grants of \$500 each**

California Credit Union was founded over 85 years ago with a commitment to supporting the community. That commitment continues with our Teacher Grant Program—a program designed to assist educators in funding learning opportunities for their students. We will be awarding 10 teachers within the combined San Diego and Riverside counties, and 10 within the Los Angeles county a Teacher Grant of \$500 each.



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[journeyplan.org](http://journeyplan.org)