

THE ADVOCATE

Thousands rally at 28 schools to fight layoffs

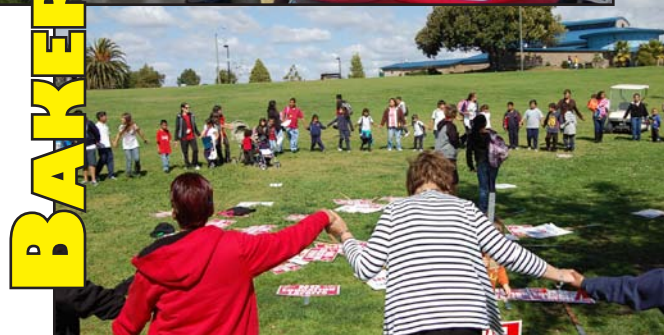
Since March 18, an astounding 6,000 parents, educators, students and community members have rallied outside of 28 neighborhood schools in an ongoing series of rallies protesting the 1,349 educator layoff notices issued by the SDUSD School Board. And we are not done yet! The San Diego community is turning out in droves with one united message and one united voice: We will not allow the School Board to decimate our schools by laying off one out of six educators! Photos from the rallies held before Spring Break are featured throughout this special photo edition of The Advocate. Photos from all rallies are available online, with more to come in the May Advocate. For a schedule of upcoming events, visit www.savesdschools.com.



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Letters in Solidarity

Bill Freeman SDEA President



Camille Zombro SDEA Vice President

Community outreach crucial to layoff fight

SDEA Members—

The challenges we face today are truly unprecedented. But we must recognize that SDEA's strength in facing these challenges lies in our unity and our collective commitment to each other. We have the opportunity to come together in solidarity to fight budget cuts, an archaic financial system that has no concern for the education of our students, and ultimately, an overall attack on middle class America. We must remember that nothing we have has been given to us. We fight daily for the basic rights of our students because, if left to our legislators, our students would be warehoused in a room with few educators in sight while they pocket millions of dollars in the name of "education reform."

Recent attempts to divide us have focused on claims that seniority-based layoffs are unfair to young, energetic educators. This argument ignores the fact that no layoffs should be happening in the first place. Regardless of who is laid off, losing one out of six educators means larger class sizes, inadequate

nursing, empty libraries, and decimated counseling and support services for all of our students. And yet, we have many reasons to be hopeful. We continue to have the full support of the community, as evidenced by the massive turnout at our site-based rallies. Parents are well aware of educators' dedication to our students. We must continue to come together with parents and community members on a scale we have never done before. We must communicate and share the issues we care about, making a collective commitment to engage in the work of the union.

Our problems today are real. Our hope lies in our ability to speak in one voice and stay united in these turbulent times. We will be calling on you for action. Again, we can win this battle, but it must be done united with each other, and our community.

In Solidarity,

Bill Freeman SDEA President

Camille Zombro SDEA Vice President

Contract Fact: Your overpayment rights

Some union members have recently been alerted that, according to SDUSD, they were overpaid. The California Labor Code describes the rights and responsibilities of employees and employers in the case of a overpayment. Under Labor Code Section 221, if an employer—including SDUSD—believes that it has overpaid an employee, it may not attempt to recoup any overpayments by unilaterally deducting money from the employee's paycheck.

If SDUSD claims you were overpaid, first determine whether that is true. Request a detailed, written explanation of how and why you were overpaid. You can ask your supervisor for such a written explanation, but should also send an email request to SDUSD Payroll Director Sue Weir (sweir@sandi.net).

If you determine that you were not, in fact, See Overpayments, p. 7

SDEA bargains to lessen layoff impacts

On April 13, SDEA's bargaining team met for the first time to bargain the impacts and effects of layoffs with the District. The team includes SDEA President Bill Freeman (right), SDEA Board member and Chollas-Mead AR Manuel Gomez (left), Garfield AR and laid off teacher Michelle Sanchez (center), SDEA Executive Director Craig Leedham, and SDEA Field Organizers Erin Clark and Abdul Sayid.



The team presented an initial proposal including protections for laid off educators regarding benefits, recall rights, leaves, job shares, packing and moving, year-round schedules and more. To download the proposal, visit http://www.sdea.net/organizing/bargaining-updates/.



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Lessons in Accountability



In addition to our highly successful school-based rolling rallies, SDEA members are finding creative ways to keep the pressure on the School Board and **hold them accountable**. From asking Board President Richard Barrera's neighbors to place "No Education Layoffs" signs in their yards to occupying the District office in support of a collective grievance, SDEA members are committed to doing whatever it takes to fight each and every one of these unnecessary layoffs!

Delegation of Educators Hold Richard Barrera Accountable

On Monday, April 28, a group of eight educators from Garfield High School, San Diego High School and Roosevelt Middle School visited Barrera outside of the class he teaches in the Labor Studies Department at City College (**upper left photo**). The teachers passed out informational leaflets to his students before class, and had a conversation with Barrera about his decision. They also distributed suggested questions for students to ask Barrera. Sample questions included:

"When you voted for layoffs, you said, 'I am going to violate your trust in me tonight. I'm going to vote for the superintendent's recommendations. Doing so goes against everything that I believe in. I don't think doing this is right. I don't think doing this is smart.' Why, as a unionist, did you miss such an important opportunity to take a principled stand with San Diego's educators?" and "What is most important to you: the County Board of Education or thousands of students that will be affected by your decision to layoff your employees?"

Garfield AR Michelle Sanchez, who coordinated the event along with Garfield CR Gary Edmonds, had this to say about the action: "I think the action tonight went well. It was small, but direct and effective. It demonstrates that even small actions can have an impact. It seems like it caught Richard Barrera off guard—he was not expecting to see teachers (union members) at his labor relations class! He spoke with us for about 15 minutes as his students were looking on. I reminded him that if he were to rescind the layoffs, we would join him to fight Sacramento to properly fund education. We would rather have our energies fighting together instead of fighting each other. He kept referring to how the credit score for the district was important for the Board to maintain control rather than the County, which is a shame because in the end the kids are the ones who are hurt by the political game."

Nurses, Counselors Demand Respect for Our Contract

On Friday, March 25 a group of nurses and counselors met with District administrators Joe Fulcher, Melissa Janack and Jennifer Gorman for a formal grievance meeting (**center right photo**). At the meeting the administrators refused to acknowledge that funds allocated for nursing and counseling must be spent on actual nurses and counselors and that schools could not eliminate these positions. More than 25 nurses and counselors came to the meeting to provide support but were prevented from attending the meeting by Janack and Gorman. Nurses and counselors across the District are committed to protecting the health of our students and enforcing the SDEA contract, and will continue organizing efforts after Spring Break to ensure that the District do the right thing and protect crucial nursing and counseling services for our students.

With a Twist: Chavez Rally on Chavez Day, Rally for the Arts

In addition to our series of school rallies to stop the layoffs, many members are taking the opportunity to broaden our community outreach. On Thursday, March 31 educators and parents from across the District rallied at Chavez Elementary School on Cesar Chavez day to protest layoffs and celebrate the life of a labor leader who knew better than anyone that an injury to one is an injury to all. The rally was preceded by a press conference highlighting our fight against layoffs (**upper right photo**). On Wednesday, April 13 students, parents and SDEA members from the Creative, Performing and Media Arts Middle School, Oak Park Music Conservatory, Crown Point Junior Music Academy, the Visual and Performing Arts Program, and sites District-wide participated in a Rally to Save the Arts (**lower left photo featuring laid off Oak Park VAPA teacher Derek Suzuki**). This event highlighted the value of SDUSD's arts and music programs in the face of devastating cuts. Students' performances included music, ballet and African dance.

The Fight Continues!

SDEA members are committed to seeing each and every layoff notice rescinded! Upcoming events as of press time include deliveries of rally DVDs and posters to Board members, a visibility action at Kearny High School before the permanent RIF hearing, a march on the Ed. Center by SDEA's Association Representatives, a rally to highlight the need to protect student supports such as nursing, counseling and library services, and more (**lower right photo!**). **TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER!**





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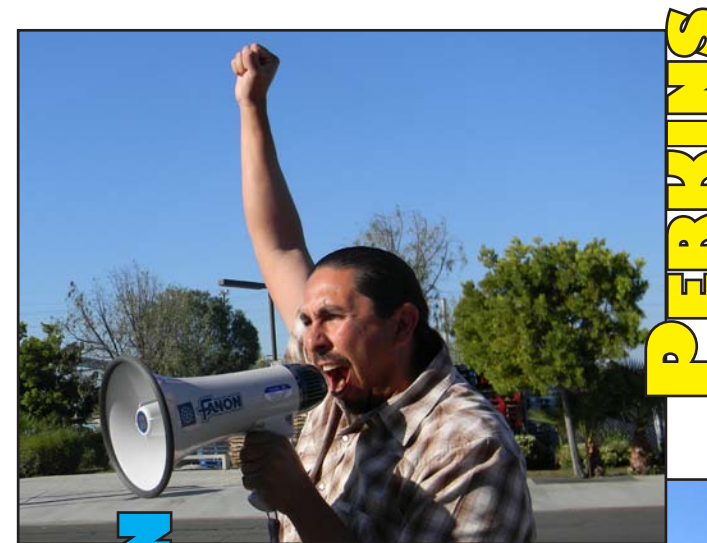
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Overpayments *Continued from p. 2*

overpaid, notify SDUSD in writing of that fact. Also clearly write that you do not authorize deductions from your paycheck to recoup the alleged overpayments.

If you determine that you were clearly overpaid, remember that SDUSD cannot take money from your paycheck without a court order or your written, voluntary consent. In a case where you agree that an overpayment occurred, you should propose a voluntary repayment arrangement.

If SDUSD makes unauthorized deductions from your paycheck to recoup alleged overpayments, it's likely a violation of Article 7 of the contract (Wages) and Labor Code. Complete an SDEA Issue Intake Form and use it as a guide in talking with your site's AR. Next steps may include a grievance and/or a referral to an SDEA/CTA attorney, the latter being a benefit for SDEA members only.

What will you leave undone?

At any moment, you could need Disability and Life Insurance. That's why it's so important to make sure you have CTA-endorsed coverage from The Standard. After all, your family and your salary are two of your most important assets. Visit MyCTA at www.cta.org or call us at 800.522.0406 (TTY), 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Pacific Time, to find out how The Standard can help protect what's important to you.

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