

THE ADVOCATE

Tubman, Promise Charter teachers, parents pressure Board

Over 200 parents, teachers and students from Promise Charter School and Harriet Tubman Village Charter School descended on the SDUSD Board meeting last week to demand better District oversight of their charter schools. Those testifying described a hostile environment where parents are told to take their kids elsewhere when they raise concerns, retaliation is common against teachers, and the charter boards are unaccountable to the school community.

Promise parent Julieta Juarez says, "I ask for a neutral mediation before the school becomes totally independent [from the District], and loses what we have built with so much love and sacrifice from all those who have an interest in keeping Promise from falling behind."

Juarez and others took their concerns to the SDUSD Board because the District has the au-

thority to oversee charter schools and make sure they are following applicable laws and their charter agreements. Speakers asked the District to do a thorough investigation of both schools, demanded quick fixes to all violations and asked the Board to ensure that there would be no retaliation against those who testified.

Both Tubman and Promise have a history of being successful schools. The recent problems began when new principals and boards of directors took control of each school and centralized all decision-making. This power grab not only led to a lot of bad decisions being made, but marginalized parents and teachers who had historically had a real voice in their schools. Parents and teachers at both schools are committed to overcoming the hostile environment that currently exists and restoring the community's voice in their schools.



Photos at right: Teachers, parents and students from Tubman and Promise charter schools packed the SDUSD Board meeting and rallied outside to demand justice.

Community Schools Reform project continues to expand

SDEA members know that our schools work best when the voices of educators and parents shape the direction of the school. A handful of SDEA sites have self-selected to possibly pilot the SDEA-SDUSD Community Schools Reform (CSR) project

in the fall of 2011. The goal of CSR is to create a bottom-up reform model driven by educators and parents. Teachers at schools including Baker, PBMS and Serra are in the process of meeting for "Envisioning Sessions" to imagine what their schools might

look like if given the necessary space and support to do the work they know needs to be done, and to determine if the CSR project sounds right for their schools.

SDEA is also working to strengthen partnerships with community groups like Equal-

ity Alliance to ensure that parent voices are heard and valued as we envision how best to support our schools and our students.

SDEA leadership is optimistic about the possibility of reform done right—by teachers, not to teachers.



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Letters in Solidarity

Bill Freeman
SDEA President

Camille Zombro
SDEA Vice President



Solidarity and alliances needed now

SDEA Members—

There are many issues confronting us today in education, not the least of which is the chronic and structural underfunding of our public schools. We have received numerous calls concerning the District's budget. We cannot overemphasize the fact that the District continues to base its budgetary decisions on numbers that we know are inaccurate, and that the District has a long and unfortunate history of issuing layoff notices they know will be rescinded. We can tell you that our solidarity is what will protect us in the fight against layoffs. As a union, we have fought layoffs every year for the past three years and will continue to do so. We cannot afford to let the annual budget game divide us. To better educate you on how we will continue to be successful in our organizing around the District's budget as well as the SD4GS School Takeover ballot initiative, SDEA's staff, along with site ARs, are conducting member outreach presentations across the District over the next few months (see page 3). These presentations will inform members and identify actions required to fight off these attacks. The organizing we have done over the past four years has positioned us well for being successful in our battle, if we all continue to act **together**.

To support us in our efforts, the recent elections provided a breath of fresh air. Governor Jerry Brown has made it clear that education is one of his main priorities. He clearly understands the value of collective bargaining, and supports unions in providing due process for employees. State Superintendent of Public Education Tom Torlakson

has proven to be empathetic to the teaching profession, and public education in general. On a recent visit with the SDEA Board of Directors, he expressed his concern with the constant attacks on public education. He was specifically concerned with the threats to SDUSD from SD4GS and pledged his support to SDEA. In recent times, we have witnessed hostile attacks by our elected officials on teachers, unions, and public education in general. It is truly gratifying to now have the support of political representatives who value educators and the union's role in protecting our due process.

The last recent leadership change occurred at the CTA State Council where CTA's Vice President, Dean Vogel, was elected President of CTA, and will assume office June 26. Dean recently spent a day in San Diego with SDEA's leadership, including ARs, discussing issues in San Diego. We look forward to his continued support as president of CTA.

Finally, we all know that these attacks on educators and public education will continue, but we must always remember that we impact the lives of millions of students, who have no voice in the decisions about their futures. These are students who someday will lead this great nation. At the end of the day, they are the ones we are standing together to protect. Their futures are simply not for sale, and cannot be measured by a test score.

In Solidarity,

Bill Freeman
Bill Freeman
SDEA President

Camille Zombro
Camille Zombro
SDEA Vice President



Superintendent of Public Education Tom Torlakson pledges support to SDEA's Board.



CTA President-Elect Dean Vogel with Diane Ravitch.

Nurses, counselors get organized

The District violated the rights of counselors and nurses when it communicated to sites that they did not have to staff nurses and counselors based on the language in article 13.6 of our SDEA contract.

Prior to this school year, sites were allocated funds for nursing and counseling based on student enrollment, but were not required to spend the money on actual nurses and counselors. As part of the last round of contract negotiations, SDEA won improvements to article 13.6 changing that. The language had previously stated that “the District **allocates...**” to school sites and now reads “the District **shall staff...**” schools sites. This means that having nurses and counselors is no longer optional.

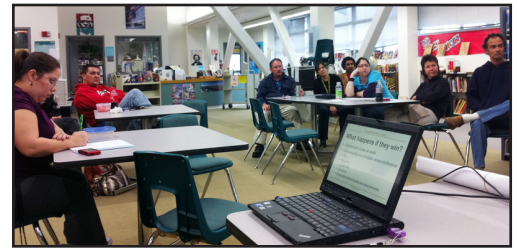
Immediately after SDEA received communications issued by school administrators regarding sites having discretion over counselors and nurses, a cease and desist letter was sent to the Chief Human Relations Officer Sandra

Huezo. Unfortunately the District continued to direct sites to treat counselors and nurses as discretionary positions, and so SDEA has filed a grievance. With the help of SDEA Association Representatives Christina Boyd (counseling) and Nancy Rudolph (nursing), nurses and counselors are coming together and organizing to make sure the District respects the vital roles they play in the health and wellbeing of our schools.

Boyd says, “School counselors are professional educators with mental health training. Drastic reductions and/or elimination of counselor services to students would have profound effects on successful school adjustment, emotional/behavioral interventions, school response to community and personal trauma, school safety, test scores, high school graduation, and students prepared to participate in post K-12 educational opportunities. We can’t let this happen!” Organizing efforts around the grievance continue.

SDEA petition combats SD4GS

SDEA has launched a campaign to gather the signatures of SDEA members, school staff, parents and other community members in support of a democratic voice guiding the future of our schools and our students. The petition will be presented in advance of the June special election urging voters to stand up against the Schools Takeover ballot initiative. Member outreach meetings are taking place at every site in SDEA to educate about the threats we face and move to action! Contact your site AR for more information about this important fight.



Teachers at Garfield High School brainstorm ways to contact parents.

Scholarships!

2011 SDEA scholarships are now available, for both SDEA members and dependents of members.

Applications are due by May 6, with final awards to be made in June. Applications are available online and in the SDEA office.

For information on how to apply, visit www.sdea.net.

Student Discipline Issues Driving You Crazy?

SDEA Training:

STUDENT DISCIPLINE RIGHTS

Student discipline issues can drive a teacher crazy, especially if administration is not supportive in the discipline process. Teachers often are unaware of their right to suspend a student, and to receive support from administration. At this training participants will learn:

1. Teacher's right to suspend a student as granted in the California Education Code and the SDEA contract
2. Administration's role in supporting the student discipline process as stipulated in the Education Code and SDEA contract
3. Strategies for enforcing student discipline rights at your site

Choose one of two dates: Tue., March 22 or Thur., March 24, 4:30-5:30 p.m.
SDEA Auditorium — 10393 San Diego Mission Rd., Suite 100

Each site is urged to send an AR/CR or other member activist to the training. Training participants will receive materials to take back to their worksites to train their co-workers in a site union meeting.



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