

# THE ADVOCATE

# FIGHT FOR 5!

Strong community public schools ensure that all students have access to a high-quality education and a brighter future. But years of budget cuts and bad decisions by the District have left our schools battered, with educators struggling to pull together slim resources to keep our classrooms running. Thousands of SDEA members attended more than 150 Bargaining Input Sessions and identified five clear bargaining priorities that we know will begin to rebuild our schools. In the **Fight for 5**, SDEA members can make San Diego Unified a top-notch school district for educators and our students. The fight for a strong union contract is the fight for strong public schools!

## What are we fighting for?



### Pay and benefits to attract and keep the best and brightest.

San Diego's students deserve a world-class education. When our pay consistently falls in the bottom county-wide, it's tough for educators to make a career commitment to San Diego Unified. Providing competitive pay and keeping our quality healthcare benefits means San Diego Unified can attract top talent, and make sure we stay.



### Lower class sizes across the board.

Every parent and educator knows that low class sizes create the best learning environment for kids. But crowded classrooms and increasing class sizes are hurting our kids. Lowering class sizes for *all* of our classrooms means our students will get the attention they need to learn.



### More counselors, nurses and special education support.

The best and safest schools make sure kids have all of the supports they need in *and* out of the classroom. San Diego Unified has cut nursing, counseling and special education services to the bone, hitting our neediest students hardest. We need more nurses, counselors and special education support to make sure all of our kids get the support they deserve.



### More elementary student enrichment classes (prep time).

A well-rounded education means more than letters and numbers. Kids need art, music, PE and more to learn and grow. Plus, these classes give elementary teachers prep time so we can do our best teaching. 45 minutes a week isn't good enough. More of these programs means a richer education for kids, and more time for teachers to prepare high-quality instruction.



### Protecting our planning time so we can do our best teaching (workload).

When teachers have time to work and plan together, kids are the real winners. When our plates get too full, we can't do our best teaching. That means less time for lesson planning, parent communication, and teacher collaboration. The District should respect our time so that we can do our best work in the classroom.



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The SDEA Advocate is published monthly by the San Diego Education Association and paid for in full by advertising revenue. Advertising rates are available upon request.

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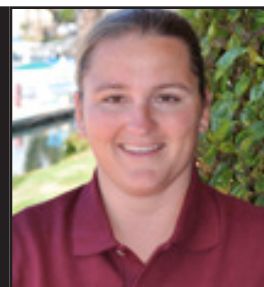
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Nanette Najera



# Letters in Solidarity

Bill Freeman  
SDEA President



Lindsay Burningham  
SDEA Vice President

## A strong membership means a strong contract

SDEA is well positioned for bargaining this year, at a time when state funding is finally increasing at significant rates and providing valuable resources to our classrooms. SDEA members continue to hold the District accountable for making both students and educators a budget priority.

Thanks to the hard work of members on the Joint Budget Committee, another furlough day was recently restored to this school year. The SDEA members on the Budget Committee maintain constant awareness of the District's budget, and are excited to report that the District's recent budget documents confirm that the final five percent of pay restoration will be implemented starting July 1 as required by our contract.

Lindsay Burningham, Dave Erving, Ron Reese and Kisha Borden have represented SDEA on the Joint Budget Committee, and worked long hours to ensure the District holds true to the agreements we negotiated. We now have, for the first time since 2008, a pay schedule that is improving and moving in the right direction. Next school year will bring the elimination of the final furlough day and pay that is almost 10 percent higher than in the darkest days of the recession.

While SDEA has made many accomplishments in recent years, there are still many battles ahead of us. We need only to look at our brothers and sisters in Ramona, Sweetwater and Alpine as they deal

with districts that are still recovering from the dark days of the past six years. Our professional rights are presently on trial in the Los Angeles courts, as wealthy corporate reformers are attempting to strike down due process, dismantle the state layoff statutes, and tie educator evaluations to standardized test scores. These are battles that we can win, but they can't be fought by a few. We need all members to be actively involved.

As SDEA prepares to start the bargaining process with the District, we must all get involved. Educators must take an active role to maintain a strong union. Our voices must be heard at School Board meetings and throughout the city. The members on the Joint Budget Committee are great examples of educators who wanted to improve all our classrooms and volunteered to do so, as are the educators below who are organizing to elect pro-worker leaders in our city and to build strong educational programs in our District.

Remember, any organization is only as strong as its members. We are grateful to members actively serving on committees and in leadership roles ensuring that we provide the best support to our members and students.

*Bill Freeman*  
Bill Freeman  
SDEA President

*Lindsay Burningham*  
Lindsay Burningham  
SDEA Vice President



SDEA leaders, members and staff pounded the pavement for mayoral candidate David Alvarez at the Super Walk on Saturday, Feb. 8. They joined roughly 800 union members from throughout San Diego in support of Alvarez's pro-worker platform.



The newly launched Early Childhood Education Organizing Team, pictured here after a union advocacy training, is bringing ECE teachers together. We're fighting for better jobs and a better program for the kids we serve. About 150 ECE teachers serve about 5,000 infants, toddlers, and kids from low-income families.



# Holding them accountable: Barnett and Evans

SDEA members are conducting “accountability sessions” with all five SDUSD School Board members in preparation for negotiations this spring. Members are asking Trustees to commit right now to three of our bargaining priorities, as they begin to plan the District’s 2014-2015 budget: To maintain benefits while making progress on compensation, to negotiate an early retirement incentive for this year, and to lower class sizes across the board.

## Evans on the Right Track

Members and parents held an accountability session with Trustee John Lee Evans at Spreckels Elementary on Tuesday, Feb. 4. Together, parents and educators discussed the importance of rebuilding our schools after years of cuts. Evans agreed that educator compensation must improve in order to retain and recruit the best and brightest. On the issue of quality health benefits that keep our families safe, Evans stated that it was a goal of his to maintain the best possible benefits. He stated that after SDUSD researched VEBA and

other options it was clear that VEBA was “a good deal.”

Evans expressed support for lower class sizes and mentioned the recent Board resolution declaring lower class sizes a District priority. After members discussed the importance of authorizing discussions over an early retirement incentive, Evans stated that he agreed with the idea of wisely investing Common Core monies in educators who are going to be around to utilize the training. While Evans didn’t make any specific promises, he expressed support for the important priorities raised by parents and educators.

## Barnett Wants Benefits Cuts

More than a dozen SDEA members met with Trustee Scott Barnett at La Jolla High School on Thursday, Feb. 6 for an accountability session to discuss the need for the District to make the classroom a budget priority.

Barnett was somewhat open to an early retirement incentive, but only agreed to bring forward a motion to direct District staff to enter into



**Union members at Spreckels Elementary invited parents to join them in making sure Trustee John Lee Evans understands that we are all united behind fair pay and benefits for San Diego’s educators and lower class sizes.**



**Trustee Scott Barnett answers questions from union members at La Jolla High School and throughout his Board area.**

such negotiations if a second SDEA members in attendance challenged Barnett’s idea for a two-tier benefits system that would divide members into different classes, and

his assertion that the District budget that will not allow for smaller classes and caseloads.

Read the March *Advocate* for reports on meetings with Trustees Richard Barrera, Kevin Beiser and Marne Foster.

# Creative charter outreach from member organizers

Members of the Member Organizing Team (MOT) have been busy learning organizing skills and doing outreach to non-union charter teachers over this past month. MOT members have reached out to charter educators on the phone, in house visits, and have helped organize a successful Professional Development event that brought together both union and non-union charter teachers on transitioning to the Common Core.

Recently the front page of the *San Diego Union Tribune* declared that San Diego has

the second largest charter growth in the nation. A dubious distinction, but what does that mean for our District?

“I think it means that now more than ever, it’s important that public school educators—meaning both charter and non-charter—are engaged together to do what’s best to protect our students and public education,” said Gisela Boronda, MOT member and veteran teacher at La Jolla Elementary. “Education, and educators are under attack. This is not something we can ignore any longer. There is a growing



**Local charter teachers discuss instructional strategies at an SDEA-sponsored professional development training on Common Core on Feb. 8.**

urgency for us to find things that unite us, not divide us. And protecting public education and our students is what should be uniting us.”

Your participation makes a difference! To help with outreach to non-union charter teachers, call Pat Alvarez at the union office at 619-283-4411.

# Announcements

## SDEA Scholarships

The application deadline for SDEA member and dependent scholarships is Friday, May 2 at 5 p.m. The Dependent Application is for graduating seniors and current college-enrolled students who are dependents of a current CTA/NEA/SDEA member. The Member Application is for current CTA/NEA/SDEA members who wish to further their own education. The applications are available in the SDEA office, or online at <http://www.sdea.net/membership/scholarships>.

## SDEA Elections

The Elections Committee has announced the Spring 2014 General Election. Nominees are currently being solicited for SDEA Officers, SDEA Board of Directors, and SDEA delegates to CTA's State Council. If you would like to run for any of these seats, please visit the SDEA Elections website download the Declaration of Candidacy and Candidate Statement forms: <http://www.sdea.net/about/sdea-elections>. Voting will take place April 4-17, and may include an electronic option, so make sure SDEA has your personal email address.



## Protect your income with Disability Insurance from The Standard.

You work hard for your money. But what if you couldn't work due to an illness or injury? Take steps to protect your income with CTA-endorsed Disability Insurance from The Standard. Choose the plan designed to meet the needs of educators like you and supported by a CTA-dedicated customer service team. Learn how The Standard can protect what's important to you at [CTAMemberBenefits.org/TheStandard](http://CTAMemberBenefits.org/TheStandard).



For costs and further details of the coverage, including exclusions, benefit waiting periods, any reductions or limitations and the terms under which the policy may be continued in force, please contact Standard Insurance Company at 800-522-0406 (TTY). Standard Insurance Company, 1100 SW Sixth Avenue, Portland, OR 97204  
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Making Health Care Better for Everyone



## Know Your Numbers and Earn \$50

Do you want to get healthy, but need an extra push? VEBA's "Know Your Numbers" Challenge is a perfect way to start. You will learn more about what you're doing well and what you could be doing better to take care of yourself and stay healthy (for example: are you getting enough exercise?). Plus you will receive a \$50 Visa gift card, just for knowing more about your health!

### Here's all you need to do:

- Register for the Challenge during the month of February at <http://www.vebonline.com/wellness-plan-benefits>
- Take the online Health Assessment from your carrier - Kaiser (<http://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org>) or UnitedHealthcare (<http://www.myuhc.com>)
- E-mail us ([healthcoach@vebaonline.com](mailto:healthcoach@vebaonline.com)) a screenshot of your completion page before the end of the month, along with your full name.

This Challenge is open to any VEBA member who has not already received a gift card for completing the Health Assessment within the last 6 months. Gift cards will be mailed this March.

### Sign up to participate and get rewarded!

Registration Dates:

February 1-28, 2014

Challenge Dates:

February 1-28, 2014

For questions/comments please contact a Health Coach at (619) 466-4386 or [healthcoach@vebaonline.com](mailto:healthcoach@vebaonline.com).

[www.vebaonline.com](http://www.vebaonline.com)