

THE ADVOCATE

Board rescinds 112 layoffs due to member pressure

On Thursday, June 3, SDUSD Board Trustees Richard Barrera, John Lee Evans and Shelia Jackson voted to overturn all 112 SDEA layoffs. This vote followed an accountability session with Trustee Evans on Monday, May 24, as well as a delegation of teachers who visited Trustees Jackson and Katherine Nakamura in their home neighborhoods on the evening of Friday, May 28 to encourage them to do the right thing.

Evans' and Jackson's reversal of their decision to lay off teachers is no coincidence. This victory was the direct result of SDEA members acting collectively to apply direct pressure to District decision-makers. SDEA members Mike Martinez, Jennifer Trower and Melissa Sanchez comprised the delegation of educators who visited Jackson and Nakamura, showing a real commitment to collective action on behalf of their union brothers and sisters. These three were joined by roughly 150 other laid off probationary members and their supporters in sharing their stories with Evans at the accountability session. Evans



Laid off probationary educators shared their stories with School Board Trustee John Lee Evans (top). Roughly 150 laid off probationary members and supporters attended the accountability session with Evans (above).

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Building our future from our foundation of strength

The last three years have posed a variety of challenges for education unions across the state. SDEA members should feel proud of the strength that we have built and the accomplishments we have achieved together despite these trying times. Our unwavering commitment to a union that is, at its core, driven by our members has allowed us to transform adversity into opportunity. Here are some of the major victories that all of us have accomplished collectively these past three years:

2007-08

- Bargaining Listening Sessions
 - 4,000+members involved

- Set clear priorities for new contract
- Response to layoffs/budget cuts
 - Focused on School Board, not state
 - Massive rallies
 - Members involved directly in their own advocacy (ARs, members at hearings, etc.)

2008-09

- Focused on site-based organizing
 - Site meetings to fortify structures
 - Board members taken to schools
- Rode layoff organizing to win back the School Board
 - No layoffs in 2009
- Positioned to avoid impasse
 - ULPs

- Labor allies
- Stood strong/patient
- When Grier became the major obstacle, we organized to oust him
 - Thousands signed a petition the length of a football field in June
 - Grier was gone by September

2009-10

- Continued site-based organizing
- Participated in School Board budget fora
 - Moved conversation toward zero-based budgeting
 - Focused on priorities without compromising our position (didn't

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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

Our path is clear if we stand together

SDEA Members—

SDEA members are incredible and powerful advocates for public education. In the last four years, we have accomplished so much together, despite the tremendous challenges put before us. What is most impressive is the fact that members are more involved at sites and standing together in real solidarity. This cultural shift in how we do our work is the only reason we settled a strong contract, won against layoffs three years in a row, shifted the balance of power on our School Board, and have found new and creative ways to give educators a real voice at work across SDUSD.

SDEA members now have the security of knowing our healthcare is protected. We know our class sizes and staffing of nurses, counselors and special educators are moving in the right direction. Our workload can now be protected through strong new contract language. Our salaries, which ranked 37th of 38 San Diego County districts in 2006, will rise to well above the county median in 2013. Our future is bright!

Now it's time to turn the tide. Public education is at a crossroads; *reacting* to challenges from Sacramento and Washington, DC simply will not achieve the goals educators across California have clearly expressed:

- o Full funding for education,

- o Protecting our core union rights, and
- o Redirecting so-called state and federal reforms toward meaningful support for education.

We *can* plan carefully alongside our allies in labor and in our communities, and we *can* organize to win the conditions our students and our members deserve. But education unions must first recognize that we will not succeed in this environment by spending more money, lobbying harder or reacting to what comes toward us. We *will* succeed by *planning* for long-term success and by shifting our resources *and* our orientation toward our parents and our communities.

SDEA members are now well-positioned to lead California and the nation in recapturing the promise of quality public education. Our strength and solidarity can help to revitalize the labor movement during a critical time. Together we can and will show the nation new models for meaningful reform, lasting union power, and real community engagement.

It has been an honor to serve as President of SDEA for the last four years.

In Solidarity,

Camille Zombro
SDEA President

Semper vigilo! A vigilant union is strong!

SDEA Members—

It is *our* job to keep our union healthy. Just like our democratic system, we can never assume that someone else will do that for us. The struggle that I undertook when I entered office four years ago was to make our union more transparent, more open to you and to incubate a spirit of unionism in our members.

There has been a sea change shift in our union, away from the “do it for you” mentality to “empower ourselves.” We have made new alliances with fellow unions and progressive groups throughout San Diego. SDEA has become a leader in the new San Diego that recognizes dignity and respect should be accorded and due to all people. It will be a struggle to keep San Diego moving forward in a progressive mode. Already the dark clouds of reactionary forces

are gathering to overturn Project Labor Agreements that honor workers and a School Board that is committed to community based schools that work as teams of parents, teachers and students.

We are always overwhelmed with the amount of problems and opportunities that present themselves to us. My dream was and remains to have a union where every member would work one hour a month for *our* own union. If that ever happens there is not a problem or opportunity we could not overcome.

It has been an honor to serve such a passionate and committed union. “Good night and good luck.”

In Solidarity,

Marc Capitelli
SDEA Vice President

Layoffs

Continued from page 1

left that session with a clear understanding of the negative impact of the Board's decision on our families and our classrooms, spurring him to move to rescind the layoffs the following week.

Without our collective show of strength, the School Board would not have voted to rescind these layoffs! For months preceding the layoff vote, SDEA leaders had been sharing our analysis of the District's numbers with Board members

demonstrating what the Board has now acknowledged to be true—that the District's budget can and will be balanced without a single educator layoff. But it was not until all 112 of the laid off probationary members worked together to bring that *same message* to those *same Board members* that Evans

and Jackson decided to join Barrera in doing the right thing.

When we speak together, we are powerful.

It was our collective voice that moved School Board members to oppose layoffs.

It was our collective voice that moved School Board members to oppose layoffs, and that same voice that will allow us to advocate effectively for our schools, our students and our profession.



Laid off probationary educators and supporters prepared together for the accountability session with Trustee John Lee Evans.

Foundations

Continued from page 1

advise on cuts!)

- Response to 8% salary cut proposal
 - Didn't panic
 - Held 17 membership meetings across the city
 - Members decided response
 - Anticipated media spin and got ahead of it
 - Worked closely with CSEAs
 - Presented counter-proposal with 1,000+ in the rain at Board mtg.
 - Continued Board pressure with candlelight vigil
 - Walked away from the table when the District wouldn't compromise
- TA reached
 - Held 8 membership meetings and emphasized need to vote
 - 45% turnout in just 2 weeks from TA to settlement—96.6% ratification
- Members organized successfully to have all 112 layoffs rescinded.

Our ability to further accomplish great things as a union depends on a continued commitment to organizing from the ground up. **WE are the union**, and it is our continued collective actions that will move our union forward. **Together WE are stronger!**



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10-11 Rep. Council Schedule

Regular meeting dates:

Sep. 15, Oct. 20, Nov. 17, Dec. 15, Jan. 19, Feb. 16,
March 16, April 20, May 18 and June 8

Alternative meeting dates:

Sep. 1, Oct. 6, Nov. 3, Dec. 1, Jan. 26, Feb. 2, March 2
and May 11

Fall Election Announcements

Each year, SDEA members have the opportunity to select representatives from among their colleagues to serve in a variety of elected positions. If you are interested in serving as an SDEA Board Member and/or CTA State Council Delegate, your Declaration of Candidacy form(s) must be received in the SDEA office by 5 p.m. on Sep. 15. The fall election will be held Oct. 6-19, and will be conducted via paper ballots which will be mailed to members' home and/or site. Materials for the election are available for download at www.sdea.net/about/sdea-elections.

DON'T MISS YOUR CHAPTER CAMPAIGN.

Take advantage of this special enrollment opportunity to get Disability and Life Insurance from The Standard. Don't miss San Diego Educators Association's Chapter Campaign from April 15 to June 15, 2010. Be prepared with secure coverage from The Standard — the only CTA-endorsed provider of Disability and Life Insurance.

Check your mail for more information coming soon, or visit Member Benefits at www.cta.org.

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Online Special Edition: Advocate Columnists

Beware public retirement system petitions

Our retired representatives/watchdogs on CTA State Council reported the information below on public employees' pension benefits. Although this information appeared in the CTA-Retired Advocate, I felt it beneficial to feature this locally as a warning to all educators to **watch out** and **don't sign any petitions** dealing with **public retirement systems**.

Marcia Fritz, President of the California Foundation for Fiscal Responsibility, has two initiatives ready for signature gathering. Its title is "New Public Employees Benefits Reform Act". Fritz intends to get a major backer, such as Meg Whitman. She will check which of the two initiatives polls the best and go with it.

The planned initiative limits the retirement benefits for new teachers. It would not impact current teachers or teachers hired prior to July 1, 2011. It would not limit disability or survivor benefits. It caps maximum benefit at 1.67 percent per year of employment (based on highest three years of base wages). The current factor could go up to 2.4 percent for persons who retired after age 60. Currently, a pension could be based on the highest year of salary, if a teacher has more than 25 years of service. It changes the age of retirement on Social Security eligibility age,

which is currently 67. Currently, a teacher can retire as early as 50 if she/he has a minimum of 30 years of service. However, the average age of retirement for teachers is 60.2 years. It provides that a retirement allowance can't be more than 75 percent of the base wage, which would require about 45 years of service to reach. This would eliminate longevity pay and sick days from being used for the purpose. Current law does

not have such a provision. It reduces the replacement ratio to about 30 percent. The current replacement ratio for CalSTRS members is approximately 62 percent. Retired teachers need close to 90 percent replacement ratio to have a secure retirement.

The great concern of several committees of CTA State Council is the possibility of two or more propositions qualifying for the November ballot. Once again, **please do not sign any petition that deals with public retirement systems or public employee payrolls**. These proposals can harm our retirement and the rights of our working CTA/NEA members.



Norma Heeter
SDEA-R President