

# THE ADVOCATE

## Under pressure, Board backpedals on school closures

In response to outrage on the part of SDEA members, parents and students, the San Diego Unified School Board voted on Tuesday, Nov. 1 to drastically scale back their plan to close up to 14 schools next year and realign dozens more across the District. The brain-child of Deputy Superintendent of Business Phil Stover, these closures were intended to be a first wave, with a dozen more to follow the subsequent year, according to the *San Diego Union-Tribune*.

The school closure proposal represents a major blunder by Stover and his staff, with months of community stress and heartache being riled up to defeat a plan that made little sense. Even the District's one supportive

argument, that closures would help solve potential budget woes, made little sense to critics. At presentations throughout the city, Stover claimed that the closures would save approximately \$5 million—a very small relative amount in an annual budget that surpasses \$1 billion. In fact, even the estimated savings of \$5 million was questioned by many teachers and ultimately members of the Board. District staff alleged that closures would save approximately \$400,000 to \$500,000 per school site, but were unable to address logistical concerns such as overcrowding, the cost to renovate remaining sites, and charter schools claiming abandoned campuses.

Educators and parents at sites across the District joined

to fight the closures. Hundreds attended a series of town halls and School Board meetings in the past several weeks protesting the closures. The Board agreed that the plan would do more harm than good, and decided that future discussions of school closures will revolve around what is best for parents, educators, students and the individual schools, and not solely the potential financial affects.

This is a major victory, but our work is not quite done. The District is still considering some elements of their closure plan. This includes the proposed closure of Pacific Beach Middle School and its merger with Mission Bay High School to create a grades 6-12 IB program the year after next (which would

involve the loss of an estimated 40 percent of the staff and students at both schools). The District is also still considering the collapse of small schools at the Crawford and San Diego High School complexes. SDEA members and parents are continuing to work together to educate the Board about the adverse impacts these decisions would have on our children. A mini-rally is planned prior to the Tuesday, Nov. 29 School Board meeting, where Trustees will review the scaled back plan in advance of a vote on Tuesday, Dec. 13 to accept or reject the proposal.

The Board's jettisoning of the majority of the school closure plan demonstrates that involved teachers and parents **do have a voice** when we work together.

## SDEA Fall Leadership prepares site leaders for the year

Association Representatives (ARs), Council Representatives (CRs), and site organizing team members from across SDEA came together on Saturday, Oct. 15 for a day of celebration and union training at the annual SDEA Fall Leadership Conference. Training courses offered included:

- Getting Members Involved
- Making Your SGT & SSC Work for Members
- Workload Rights: Fighting Back against Workload Overload

- Special Education: From Caseload to Workload
- Big Picture (education and union issues at the national and state level)
- Know Your Contract, Know Your Rights
- Managing the Boss: What to Do When the Boss is the Problem
- Student Discipline

Please acknowledge the ARs, CRs, and site organizing team members who came out on Saturday. Their dedication makes our union strong!



In "Managing the Boss: What to Do When the Boss is the Problem" participants examined escalation as an element of a successful organizing campaign. From left: Viraj Ward (Crawford CHAMPS), Sue Giaquinta (Marston MS), Lynrae Swain (Scripps Ranch HS), Megan Sussamn (Sessions Elem.) and Claudia Weimer (Bayview Terrace Elem.). More photos on page 4!





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# Letters in Solidarity

Bill Freeman  
SDEA President



Camille Zombro  
SDEA Vice President



# Occupiers offer national example

SDEA Members—

As recently published on SDEA's website, dozens of SDEA member delegates to CTA State Council joined roughly 500 rank and file public school teachers from across the state in an Occupy LAUSD protest last month (see photo above). We joined our voices with thousands across the country, demanding an end to the systemic dismantling of public education through a combination of underfunding and legislation that makes it increasingly easier for private interests to take over our local public schools.

For all its patchwork variations in tenor and content (as is always the case with any truly grassroots phenomenon), this Occupy movement may be the moment that forces Americans to address the inequality of income in this country, and may pose an opportunity for those of us who care deeply about public education to shed some light on the special interests who have spent years organizing to see this precious American institution dismantled.

We know that corporate interests have moved aggressively to privatize education in this country. These same corporate interests have mounted a concerted attack on the fundamental right of American workers to form unions. And now common citizens across our nation are standing up in protest. These demonstrators are teachers, firemen, nurses, carpenters, pilots, parents and students—people like us. Corporate greed has cost many of us our homes,

health insurance, jobs, and the opportunity to enjoy the American Dream. And we have had enough!

As we look at the history of this great nation, it is well documented that change is hard. When SDEA members fight to protect our own core rights, it is heartening to know that our fight is merely one small part of a swelling national movement. We see examples of increasing income stratification in our own backyard: Trustee Scott Barnett is calling for a 10 percent pay cut from teachers, while at the same time Superintendent Bill Kowba is recommending a pay raise for CFO Ron Little (the primary architect behind the pink-slipping of one out of six teachers last March). When we protest these hypocrisies, we are bolstering a growing movement that demands respect for the contributions of public sector workers to the fundamental fabric of our nation.

The Occupy movement has begun to shift conversations about income inequality in the media and in the halls of elected office. By joining our voices together with our fellow workers, parents and community members, we can shift the balance of power to protect our public schools, our classrooms, our students and our core union rights.

**Together We Are Stronger!  
In Solidarity,**

*Bill Freeman*  
Bill Freeman  
SDEA President

*Camille Zombro*  
Camille Zombro  
SDEA Vice President

# Bayview Terrace Members Stand Up for the Five-Year Evaluation



This may sound like a familiar story: Last year, the Principal at Bayview Terrace Elementary issued a blanket denial of members' right to request the five-year evaluation cycle, just as the Principal at Encanto Elementary did last year as well. The teachers at Bayview Terrace decided to take a page from Encanto's book. They invited the Labor Relations staff to come out to their school for the Step Three grievance meeting so that the

District could see that members are firm and united in demanding that our contract be honored. Unfortunately, just as with the Encanto grievance, the District has yet to offer a fair remedy. The grievance will advance to arbitration, and members at Bayview Terrace are committed to seeing this right protected for themselves and for all SDEA members. By standing together, they are strengthening their site and our contract!

# Contract Fact: Leaves and Layoffs

Recently, two teachers who were laid off shortly after giving birth last spring experienced the same violation of their contractual rights under the Layoff Impacts and Effects settlement agreement (reached on June 8, 2011). Those members educated themselves and successfully fought back. Here is their story.

Both members were recalled this fall, but wanted to exercise their right to use leave rather than return immediately to the classroom. Human Resources initially told the members that they could not apply for leave because the deadlines had already passed last spring. That is not true! As part of the Layoff Impacts and Effects negotiations, SDEA secured language allowing recalled members to apply for long-term leaves within ten days of the recall. The language reads: "Upon notice of reappointment, unit members shall have ten (10) days to request a long-term leave of absence. The District shall communicate this leave deadline in any reappointment notice

provided to unit members."

Rather than execute their responsibility under this language, District representatives instead informed both recalled new mothers that if they were not willing to return to the classroom right away, they would have to waive their right to recall this year. These two members contacted their site Association Representatives, and then worked with SDEA staff to enforce their contractual rights. Both were recalled, and their leaves were approved (as the agreement requires).

If you are a laid off SDEA member, it is important that that you review the Layoff Impacts and Effects settlement agreement. The agreement provides rights concerning benefits, transfer, additional work days, job share, packing and moving, leaves, waiver of reappointment of probationary teachers and make-up work days for movement from traditional calendar to year round.

A copy of the agreement is available on SDEA's website.



# Catastrophic Leave Bank Nearly Empty!

You cannot help your colleagues in need, or be eligible to receive assistance if you need it, unless you donate one full-salary sick leave day (or more) to the SDEA-AASD-POA Catastrophic Leave Bank.

The Catastrophic Leave Bank provides additional paid sick leave when a member runs out of their own paid sick leave. Thousands of SDUSD employees have donated days since the bank was established in 1999 and hundreds have been the recipients of donated leave.

But the bank cannot continue to function without an infusion of new donations. That is where you come in. A one-time donation of a full-salary sick leave makes the employee eligible to receive sick leave credit from the bank. More importantly, it enables the Catastrophic Leave Bank to continue to provide assistance to all those who are in need.

Please contact your AR for an Enrollment/Donation form (or visit the SDEA website at [www.sdea.net](http://www.sdea.net) to download the form). Return the form in person or by mail to Gloria Rangel in the SDUSD Human Resources office (HR Benefits Office - Room 1150, 4100 Normal St., San Diego, CA 92103 or fax to 619-725-8132).

Forms must be submitted by Dec. 16 in order to prevent full depletion of the bank.

# Contract for Tubman!

**BREAKING:** After two long years of organizing, bargaining and standing up for one another, the teachers at Tubman Village Charter School have ratified their first union contract with a 13-0 vote! Tubman teachers are the first charter school SDEA members to negotiate and ratify a Collective Bargaining Agreement. Their accomplishment trailblazes a path for future charter educators who fight to form a union. Congratulations and welcome, Tubman!





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Or, call The Standard's dedicated CTA Customer Service Department at **800.522.0406** (TTY), 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Pacific Time.



<sup>1</sup>Based on figures developed by Standard Insurance Company as of March 31, 2011. For costs and further details of the coverage, including exclusions, 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).

## All smiles at Fall Leadership!



SDEA Board of Directors members Kisha Borden (Zamorano Elem.) and Iris Anderson (Ross Elem.) prepare to expand their contractual expertise at Fall Leadership.



"Passing time" in between classes. From left: Anne Thompson-Welch (Normal Heights Elem.), Sue Giaquinta (Marston MS), Iris Anderson (Ross Elem.), Kevin Archer (Twain HS) and Lindsay Burningham (Scripps Elem./SDEA Board).



Candy Schauer (Madison HS), Karen Ellsworth (Euclid Elem.), Monique Anderson (Morse HS) and Melissa Roy-Wood (La Jolla Elem./SDEA Board) brainstormed methods for getting members involved, such as sending emails, one-on-one conversations, and handing out flyers.

## Toys! Toys! Toys!

SDEA and the Labor Council are teaming up for a holiday toy drive for the children of union members who are out of work or underemployed. New, unwrapped toys may be dropped off at the SDEA office through Dec.15. The Labor Council has asked for items, such as gift cards, intended for children ages 12 and older. Toys will be handed out at the Labor Council's annual Holiday Food and Toy Distribution on Dec. 23.