

# THE ADVOCATE

## Perkins teachers join up with Chavez protest

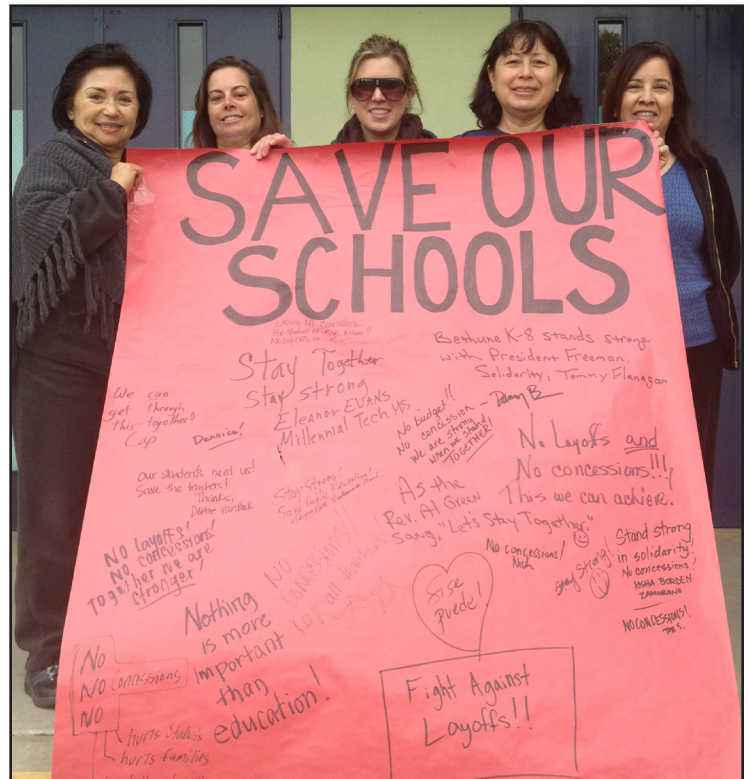
More than 1,000 union members and community activists took to the streets on March 31 for the San Diego Labor Council's annual Cesar Chavez Day March. The five-mile march, which started and ended at Cesar Chavez Park in Barrio Logan, highlighted several issues currently affecting San Diego workers by conducting actions throughout the city.

The final action of the day called for an end to education cuts and layoffs, in which the

entire march passed by Perkins K-8 School and signed a petition protesting education cuts. A team of teachers from Perkins directed marchers to the petition, as well as distributed flyers about our upcoming May 1 rally to protest cuts to education (beginning at 3:30 at Roosevelt MS). This sort of "mutual aid" labor solidarity is crucial if we are to successfully combat threats to the middle class such as the underfunding of public education and the national attacks on labor unions.



Marcher and Garfield AR Michelle Sanchez (bottom left) joins workers from around San Diego in signing the petition.



From left: Perkins members Graciela Acosta, Penny Wolfe, Leanne McDowell, Alicia Salazar-Kuncz (AR) and Socorro Fregoso-Aguilar show off the "Save Our Schools" petition in advance of the Labor Council Cesar Chavez march.



Salazar-Kuncz (center) and McDowell (right) distribute flyers about SDEA's May 1 rally to the Chavez march participants.





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## Together we are stronger: Not just a slogan

Together we are stronger. It sounds simple but it works. Time and time again we've shown each other that together we can not only figure out how best to help a struggling student succeed in school but that we can protect the community and classroom in which they're thriving. We do it because we care. We do it because we are educators. We do it because over 8,000 union members acting collectively are a powerful force for protecting public education.

As challenging as the threats that educators and all public servants face today, I know that we have the power and the will to do what's necessary to protect our schools and our families. Now is the time to come together. This District's decision to issue layoff notices to more than 1,600 educators presents us with a fight not only for the future of our students, but for the future of our profession.

Let's be clear: If the School Board goes through with over 1,600 educator layoffs, including the elimination of more than 100 nurses and counselors, our class sizes will skyrocket and our schools will become dangerously unsafe. We will fight with everything we have to protect our schools. It will not be easy. The District has done far more to divide our school community than to bring us together. Their response to demands from educators and parents to do the right thing and rescind layoffs has been to



## Letters in Solidarity

Bill Freeman  
SDEA President

call for deep concessions to our pay, healthcare, and class size protections. How easy for School Board members to say, once again, that educators must put their families at risk to balance the budget. The simple truth is that educators in San Diego don't have enough to bail this District out time and time again. We must bring our school communities together to protect our schools. It is time for the District to stop using our commitment to this work and our students against us.

In spite of the District's continued efforts to divide our membership and our parents, we will continue to do the right thing. SDEA's Board and Representative Council recently and overwhelmingly passed a resolution that calls out the District for budgeting in the dark and putting our students at risk. We will continue to demand that the District do the right thing, rescind layoff notices and work with us to fix this broken system. We will not rest until they do. Together we are stronger!

*Bill Freeman*

Bill Freeman  
SDEA President

## Serra High School rallies against school cuts

Hundreds of SDEA members, students, parents and classified workers rallied at Serra High School to protest layoffs on March 19. Twenty-six of the school's 99 certificated staff have been pink-slipped.

One of those 26 is English teacher Linda Nelson. "Teachers, whether pink-slipped or not, need to actively work together in their communities to let parents and School Board members know how deeply committed they are to educating their children," says Nelson. "If that means that the entire faculty needs to stand on a corner with signs, then let's do that! If it means walking a mile to the Ed Center, then let's do that! No matter what teachers do to support one another, do it together!"

Serra AR Tom Cotner agrees. "We didn't want to sit back and not do anything," says Cotner, who chaired a 20-member rally planning group that emphasized how layoffs will devastate students. Serra remains committed to fighting layoffs, and is planning a large turnout for SDEA's May 1 rally!



**Top: Hundreds rally at Serra to protest the Board's proposed education cuts. Bottom: Serra AR Tom Cotner (center) says "No layoffs!"**

# Board layoffs of 100 nurses, counselors imperil students

Written by Molly Williams (School Counselor) and Ann Sutherland (School Nurse)

If the SDUSD School Board goes through with more than 1,600 educator layoffs including the elimination of more than 100 nurses and counselors, our class sizes will skyrocket and our schools will become dangerously unsafe.

In October counselors shared with the Board that over the last two years, the percentage of Suicide Risk/Self Harm (EP 10) reports has increased by 76.2%. At our last school counselors' training, our department director shared that the number is continuing to grow. How are we going to keep our children safe, how are we going to be able to support not only their academic needs, but their emotional needs, when the District eliminates over half of all counselors through cuts

from last year and the proposed cuts for this year?

The District has recently received tremendous accolades for improving attendance rates. This was achieved in part by hard work done by our school counselors. One of the roles of the school counselor is to monitor attendance, meet with students and parents when there are attendance problems, and put programs in place to encourage strong attendance.

Bullying statistics are on the rise. Current stats show that one out of four teens are bullied and as many as 160,000 students stay home on any given day due to fear of being bullied. As counselors, we work to ensure students feel safe and that they are educated about the effects of bullying and what to do when you are being bullied. Through programs such as Second Step (violence prevention and



School nurses protest the School Board's decision to lay off another 100 nurses and counselors on March 6.

anti-bullying curriculum), mediations, classroom guidance lessons, small group counseling, and outside counseling referrals, school counselors make a huge impact in ensuring our students feel safe on campus. When

children do not feel safe, they do not learn.

Due to cuts in the nursing and wellness department, the concept of "safe staffing" is not something that school nurses have experienced lately.

*See SAFETY, page 4*

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## Safety

*Continued from p. 3*

Nurses have been cut to bare bones in some schools and are practically non-existent in others. The nursing model has been changed from having at least one nurse in every school, to many schools having minimal nursing care, if any at all. We've had to apply a "cluster model" type of nursing where each cluster of schools has a nursing leader who coordinates the care by assigning a limited number of nurses to run around and do procedures: give insulin, screen and write up assessments for IEP's, teach staff how to give medications, administer emergency medications, and educate about diabetes, anaphylaxis, blood borne pathogens, first aid, and child abuse. Nurses also coordinate the vision screenings, follow-up, and address myriad questions and concerns coming in from the schools on health issues. Moreover, nurses are assigned to train the health techs and office staff in immunizations, first grade physicals, and oral health exams. Besides all this, all schools are required to maintain a list of all the health problems at each site and need to be trained in how to handle any emergencies. Individualized Health Care Plans (ISHP's) need to be initiated on all students with procedures or life threatening conditions, doctor's orders need to be obtained, and staff need to be instructed on how to care for that child. This is all done by a very limited number of itinerant nurses. The schools that have at least bought some time are in a position to have a little more continuity of care—but such crucial needs shouldn't be left to chance.

This is school nursing cut to the bone, and at that, we

are feeling like we are failing miserably. Many school nurses find themselves driving around all day to cover one procedure after another, in addition to handling emergencies, assessments, and teaching. In health care, we refer to an unexpected occurrence involving death or serious physical or psychological injury, or the risk thereof, as a "sentinel event" (as defined by the Joint Commission). Needless to say, the risk of these sentinel events occurring rises as the number of nurses and counselors decrease.

While all this is going on, what is being missed is help for the children with asthma, diabetes, emotional/behavioral problems, students who frequent the health office, and those with frequent absences due to medical problems. Medical referrals are not being written or followed up on. Teachers are spending more time dealing with the health and emotional problems of their students, which is taking up valuable instructional time. 911 is being called more frequently to handle medical emergencies. There is no one in the schools to pick up the problems that could be helped or prevented (e.g. health, emotional/behavioral, family, financial). With a nurse and counselor in the schools, these problems can be helped and students can be in a position to learn and not be distracted by what is going on in their lives.

Our schools are NOT safe now. With more cuts on the way, the future is very bleak for student safety and learning. This not right! The School Board must do the right thing, rescind layoffs, and follow the contractual nursing and counseling ratios NOW!