

THE ADVOCATE

Tubman teachers fight for safer school

On March 11, following the very strong Fight for 5! presentation by a delegation of District SDEA members, 14 SDEA members from Harriet Tubman Village Charter School (78% of the teaching staff) stood arm in arm before the School Board, together with parents, to ask one thing: Please renew the charter of the school they have worked so hard to build, but do so only on the condition that a full investigation be launched into the hostile and intimidating culture of fear created by the school's principal.

Teachers and parents of Tubman told the School Board how the treatment of teachers has resulted in an extremely high rate of teacher turnover, with one class of students already on their *fourth* teacher this year. The



SDEA members from Harriet Tubman Village Charter School successfully called upon the School Board to renew their charter contingent upon an investigation into the workplace culture of hostility and fear cultivated by the Tubman principal.

Tubman union members and parents paid off. By a vote of 3-1, the School Board voted to renew the Tubman charter contingent on an investigation, which was launched the next day by the SDUSD Charter

Governance. "The idea that the [Tubman] Board and its attorney and the leader of this charter is coming before this elected body and telling us that we're in a position that there is basically nothing that we can do about a potentially abusive situation that is intolerable in our District, is offensive."

Teachers have continued organizing with parents to cooperate in the investigation and to bring more accountability and transparency to the non-elected Tubman Board of Governance. Charter school boards are non-elected bodies, and are usually self-appointed. As a result, there is little critical oversight. Teacher and parent efforts to meet with individual Tubman Board members have been rejected.

"We tell our students to say something if they are being bullied, which is an important part of letting them know they are part of a caring school community," says a group letter from teachers to parents. "This is what we have done. We understand it is difficult to hear about serious issues at our school, but by bringing this forward we are addressing these issues in hope that conditions will improve."

"We want fair treatment and a safe environment free from bullying, intimidation, and harassment," explains first-year teacher Lauren Nacrelli. "Being union is a way for us to speak out to our employer and have protections. No one is standing alone. We are unified."

Being union is a way for us to speak out to our employer and have protections. No one is standing alone. We are unified. —Tubman teacher Lauren Nacrelli

Board also heard how teachers have been routinely targeted by administration. One teacher was required to hand-write 15 full-length lesson plans every weekend, due every Monday. When she missed one deadline due to a health emergency, she was fired the next day.

The organizing efforts by

Office. The initial findings of that investigation are due to the School Board by April 11.

"I gotta say, my blood is boiling right now," said School Board member Richard Barrera after hearing from teachers and parents, and then from the Tubman school administration and the Tubman Board of



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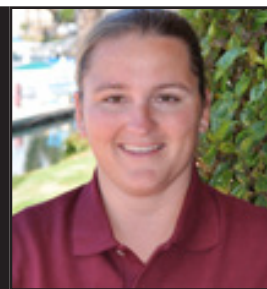
Nanette Najera



Letters in Solidarity

Bill Freeman
SDEA President

Lindsay Burningham
SDEA Vice President



Common sense for Common Core

Implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) is fully upon us now in San Diego Unified School District. To be successful it must be properly implemented with fair and appropriate assessments.

NEA has identified five key areas that are necessary for CCSS to be effective:

1. All educators must have the **time, support, and tools** they need to strengthen their instruction.
2. Develop **implementation plans** to transition to CCSS and better assessments. These plans must be fair to students and understandable to families.
3. Implementation Advisory Committees **must include the voices** of educators.
4. Districts must provide **flexibility during the two-year transition** until CCSS aligned assessments become available so students can focus on learning and educators can focus on real teaching, rather than focusing on the high-stakes consequences of current tests that may not be aligned to the standards.
5. States should modify their **accountability systems** to include multiple, appropriate and valid measures of student learning rather than solely focusing on high-stakes standardized tests.

SDEA has held SDUSD accountable to the five

key areas. Our union placed a demand to consult and advise on curriculum issues. Once the District developed a plan, SDEA placed a demand to bargain on the negotiable impacts prior to its implementation. SDUSD will receive 22 million dollars for CCSS over a two year period with a large percentage going towards professional development and planning.

SDEA members have expressed concerns with how quickly implementation is being pushed and the lack of specific guidance provided to them. Unfortunately, this is a common apprehension voiced across the nation. Most importantly, educators need to be fully prepared and receive the necessary support to effectively implement the standards in their classrooms on a daily basis. Of particular concern in SDUSD is the lack of computer equipment necessary for students to become proficient in keyboarding skills. This is an issue that must be dealt with if our students are to be successful when they participate in the smarter balance test used to evaluate student achievement.

We must be careful not to rush implementation until curriculum and assessments are clear, focused and provide equal access to every student while guaranteeing high quality instruction aligned with the standards.

Bill Freeman

Bill Freeman
SDEA President

Lindsay Burningham

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SDEA Vice President

Getting the word out on the Fight for 5!

Last month SDEA members rolled out our Fight for 5! bargaining campaign, presenting our initial bargaining proposal before a packed house at the March 11 School Board meeting. This month it's the District's turn. Union members are spreading the word to parents about our priorities, which are focused on the classroom and on rebuilding our schools, *before* the District gets their message out. Talk to your site Association Representative to help educate parents at your school!



Members at Hage leafletted parents about the Fight for 5!

SDEA and Alliance: A partnership for stronger schools

Between Michelle Rhee, corporate “reformers” and devastating budget cuts, our schools have been under attack from all sides. Parent and community engagement is a key part of building a bigger boat to navigate the shark-infested waters of public education attacks, which have left educators scrambling to find the resources needed to fully educate our students.

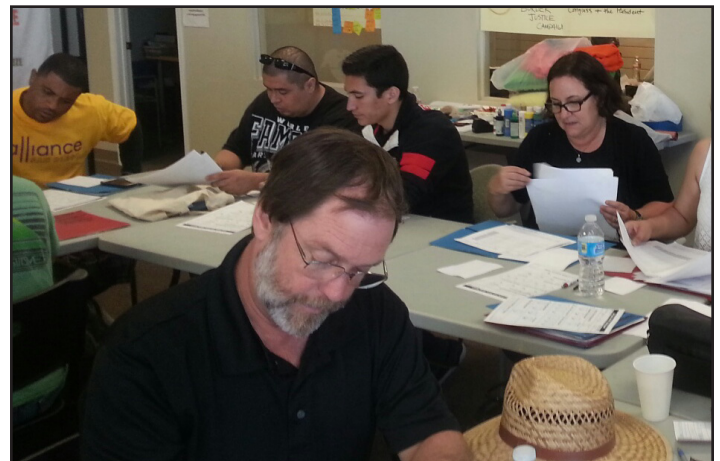
One tactic of groups like Students First and Parent Revolution has been to divide parents and educators in an attempt to stop us from joining forces and working together. SDEA members and leaders took on this challenge after the passage of the divisive and misleading “Parent Trigger” law, and have continued to build bridges and relationships with parents and public education advocates in our city. One of the most important of these relationships for SDEA members is with Alliance San Diego.

Alliance San Diego is a non-profit, non-partisan 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to provide a means for diverse individuals and organizations to share information, collaborate

on issues, and mobilize for change in the pursuit of social justice, especially in low-income communities and communities of color. Alliance and SDEA have worked together to engage parents and voters on issues that matter to our school communities like safe staffing, class size and the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF).

This past fall we reached out to more than 4,000 voters and parents on these issues. The results of this civic engagement program helped us identify common areas of interest where educators, parents and community members can organize together to improve public education, and are reflected in our Fight for 5! bargaining campaign to rebuild public education.

Our partnership is getting stronger. In March, SDEA and Alliance launched a series of workshops to help parents develop their leadership capacity as advocates for quality public education. If you are interested in attending one of the upcoming workshops (see schedule at right) please RSVP to Jonathon Mello at mello_j@sdea.net.



Ray Adair (CPMA AR) and Mary Jane Zappia (Speech-Language Pathologist AR) helped survey more than 4,000 voters as part of Alliance San Diego’s civic engagement program. The survey results (see below) show that members and voters are on the same page when it comes to keeping our kids healthy and safe in school.

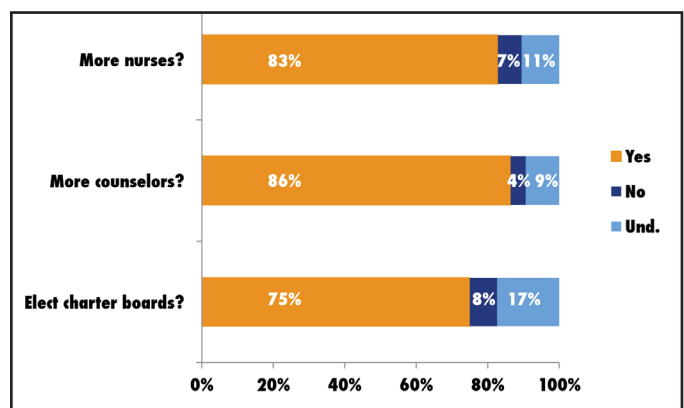
Family Leadership Development Trainings

- March 26:** How is Our School District Structured?
- April 9:** The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and How Schools are Funded
- April 23:** Legislative Visits and Establishing Dialogue with Elected Officials
- May 7:** Becoming an Effective Spokesperson for Your Child: Media, Interviews, and More
- May 21:** Community Schools: Visions of Family, Teacher, and Community Collaboration
- June 4:** Healthy Kids, Healthy Schools: Nutrition and Wellness at Our School Sites
- June 18:** Piecing the Puzzle Together: Opportunities for Engaged Families

Members’ priorities line up with what voters want

One of SDEA members’ top priorities in the Fight for 5! is to bargain more nurses, counselors and special education support. We are not alone! According to a survey of more than 4,000 voters in southeast San Diego conducted this fall by Alliance San Diego, the overwhelming majority of voters agree.

Specifically, voters supported lowering nursing caseloads to 750-to-1. Under the current contract language, a school must have 2,367 students to get a full-time nurse. Voters supported lowering counselor caseloads to 250-to-1. Currently, the contractual caseload for a high school counselor is 459 students, and an elementary school must have 2,132 students to get a full-time counselor. Letting parents and voters know that SDEA members are bargaining to achieve our *shared* priorities will be key to winning the safe staffing levels our students deserve.



Source: Nov. 2013 Alliance San Diego community survey.

Announcements

May 1: May Day March

The citywide May Day march for worker justice will kick off at San Diego HS at 2:30 on Thursday, May 1. This is SDEA's first bargaining date, and SDEA members will be engaging marchers in a bargaining solidarity action.

May 2: SDEA Scholarship Deadline

Details and applications are available in the SDEA office or at www.sdea.net/membership/scholarships.

May 7: National School Nurse Day

Help celebrate National School Nurse Day by thanking your school nurses for the role they play in keeping our students and schools healthy and safe.

May 8: Day of the Educator Celebration

SDEA members will celebrate the Day of the Educator on Thursday, May 8 at the SDEA office from 4-6 p.m. This is SDEA's second bargaining date, and the event will include action stations to support the bargaining campaign (all while earning tickets for the raffle!). Food and non-alcoholic beverages will be provided.

You're protecting them.
Who's protecting you?



Your loved ones depend on you, but would you still be able to provide for them if a disability prevented you from working? Take steps to maintain their way of life and yours with CTA-endorsed Disability Insurance from The Standard. It helps safeguard against loss of income due to an illness or injury. Start protecting what's important to you at CTAMemberBenefits.org/TheStandard.



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). Standard Insurance Company, 1100 SW Sixth Avenue, Portland, OR 97204 GP 190-LTD/S399/CTA.1 SI 16000-CTAvol



Making Health Care Better for Everyone



Focus on Health: New Group Health Coaching Program for VEBA Members!

As a VEBA member, you have always been eligible to receive free coaching to help improve your health. Now, you are also eligible to join a new in-person group coaching program!

Group coaching is a theme-based program that lets you meet face-to-face with a Health Coach. Based on your needs, the Health Coach will address specific topics such as...

- Weight Management
- Cholesterol
- Musculoskeletal (back, neck, spine)
- Respiratory (COPD, COLD, chronic bronchitis and/or asthma)
- Blood pressure
- Diabetes

The program is for anyone who has a medical diagnosis or is at risk for a health condition. It is open to all VEBA members and dependent family members who are 18-years or older. VEBA will determine dates and locations based on your needs and interests.

Interested in participating?

Please contact a Health Coach at (619) 466-4386 or at healthcoach@vebaonline.com

www.vebaonline.com