

# THE ADVOCATE

SAN DIEGO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

## EDUCATOR PROTECTIONS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Our lives look much different than they did just a month ago due to the COVID-19 pandemic. SDEA members are now in the midst of transitioning their instruction to online platforms.

In late March, Superintendent Cindy Marten announced the District's intent to move to a distance learning model. We have a voice because we have a union and were able to bargain protections to this new delivery model.

Your SDEA Bargaining Team analyzed input from more than 2,000 educators across the District who responded to the distance learning survey. This information helped guide the decisions made at the bargaining table over spring break.

After spring break, the MOU provides a soft launch period for educators to transition to graded distance learning. This transition will give our educators time to prepare lessons and resources, participate in professional development, reach out to students and their families, and begin online instruction.

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## SCHOOL BUDGETS MAY BE THE NEXT — VICTIM OF COVID-19 —

As the country is convulsed by the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, our schools have enjoyed relative calm insofar as funding is concerned. That's because our budget for the 2019-2020 school year is already in place. The budget for next school year is a whole different story.

California has already incurred significant costs to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic health emergency. For example, the state has allocated funding to lease medical centers to expand the state's hospital and laboratory capacity and purchase and refurbish medical supplies, including ventilators. Additionally, it's anticipated tax revenues will be lowered as a result of increased unemployment and lowered economic activity. This crisis will also likely lead to a depletion of the state's \$20 billion rainy day fund.

### STATE BUDGET THROWN INTO UNCERTAINTY

During the olden days of a few months ago, Gov. Newsom proposed 2.29% percent increase for schools funding. The governor's budget included additional funding for things like community schools, teacher recruitment, and pension support. However, the impacts of the pandemic on the budget is already being felt in the form of upended budgetary timelines.

Usually, we get a better sense of the state's budget in what's called the May Revise, which as you may have guessed comes out in May. The May Revise includes updated tax receipts and is

supposed to represent a better picture of what the budget for the following school year may look like. However, since tax filing deadlines have been moved to mid-July, there may not be a May revision.

This means that the State will probably adopt a budget in August of 2020, the same month our schools are supposed to restart. Given the overall trajectory of our nation's economy, and the strains put on the state's budget by the pandemic, it is expected the state's budget for next year will be facing sizable problems.

### INSUFFICIENT FEDERAL FUNDING SUPPORT

The massive federal rescue legislation passed since the spread of the pandemic will help in absorbing some of the negative budgetary impacts. However, the support from the federal government will need to increase for us to avoid massive negative hits to our district/state budgets. For example, the enormous \$2 trillion CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act) allocates only 0.0065% of funds specifically for all K-12 schools in the entire United States.

### SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES FIRST

This crisis makes the need to pass corporate property tax reform more important than it already was. In the couple of months before the COVID-19 crisis, close to 4,000 SDEA

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Hage Elementary teacher *Adam Goldstein* reading to students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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# LETTERS IN SOLIDARITY

**KISHA BORDEN**  
SDEA PRESIDENT



**SCOTT MULLIN**  
SDEA VICE PRESIDENT



## EDUCATORS SHINE IN THIS CHALLENGING NEW WORLD

March 13. The final day of a week many of us were dreading. There were rainy days scheduled, a full moon, and finally, Friday the 13th. We had no idea what was in store for everyone on that final day. It was the last day of school as we knew it.

Monday, March 16 was the beginning of a whole new world. A whole new way of connecting with our students. A whole new way of delivering instruction.

When teachers walked out of their classrooms on that Friday, none of us knew what the next few weeks would bring. This past month has been a journey that none of us were prepared to take and we've all experienced a wide range of emotions.

But, through it all, we have been grounded by who we are. We are educators. As educators, we have all tried to make sense of this new world we are living in. For the past month, educators everywhere have tried to figure out how we would continue doing what we know. How we would continue making a difference in the lives of our students.

In the early days of this shutdown, many of us found a way to make a difference. Dozens of educators showed up to school sites to distribute food to families. It was a few hours each day to reconnect with students and provide vital support for their families.

Other educators answered the call for volunteers at the stadium. For the last five Saturdays, a small group of educators have joined our brothers and sisters of the San Diego and Imperial Counties

Labor Council to distribute food to thousands of San Diego families.

Educators have spent the last month diving into a completely new way of teaching. They have spent hours every day learning a completely new way of delivering instruction. Hundreds of new online learning platforms have been created and launched. Thousands of laptops have been delivered to students. Thousands of educators have been able to reconnect with their students through Zoom calls, emails, and Class Dojo messages.

All of this has happened in the middle of a worldwide pandemic. It is extremely important that we all remember that this is not normal. What we are attempting to do, has never been done before. We must remember to give ourselves, our colleagues, and our students the flexibility, grace and time to adjust to this new world.

Thank you for all you are doing for our students. Thank you for trying something you've never tried. Thank you for all the time you are pouring into your craft. We see you and we appreciate you. Please take care of yourself and your family. Take some time for yourself. Reach out to friends and family. Don't try to do this alone. Together we are stronger. Take care.

**KISHA BORDEN**  
SDEA PRESIDENT

**SCOTT MULLIN**  
SDEA VICE PRESIDENT

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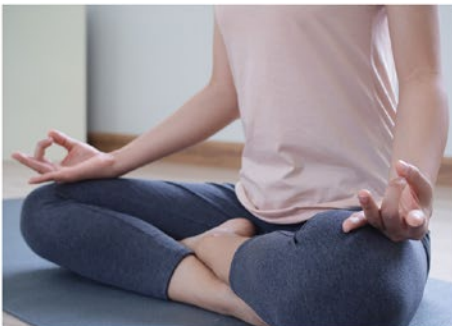
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CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS  
**VEBA**

## EASING YOUR STRESS AND ANXIETY ABOUT CORONAVIRUS

With everything going on in the world, you may be feeling a range of emotions. Here are some ways to manage your fears and anxieties:



- 1 **Get the facts.** Stick to credible sites like the CDC ([cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)), the World Health Organization ([who.int](http://who.int)) or [coronavirus.gov](http://coronavirus.gov).
- 2 **Stay healthy.** In addition to washing your hands and other preventative measures, try to maintain good-for-you habits like exercising, drinking water and opting for nutritious foods.
- 3 **Take mindful breaks.** Set aside time each day to calm your emotions by meditating, doing gentle yoga or listening to relaxing music. Need help getting started? VEBA members have free premium access to the Sanvello Health app. It offers guided lessons and peer support. Download from the Apple App Store or Google Play.
- 4 **Reach out for support.** The Optum Emotional Support line is available to all VEBA members free of charge. Speak to a professionally trained mental health expert 24 hours, 7 days a week by calling **866-342-6892**. It is open to family and friends as well.

Connect with the VEBA Resource Center (VRC) online! Join our Dr. Sondoozi every Thursday from noon to 1 p.m. for a Facebook Live chat on mental well-being. Dr. Sondoozi will answer your questions on stress and coping during these tough times. Follow the VRC on Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn for well-being resources and the latest news.

# SDEA

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

### SUBSTITUTE PAY GUARANTEED UNDER SDEA COVID-19 AGREEMENT

SDEA and SDUSD have reached an [agreement](#) on two Memoranda of Understanding regarding the school closures due to COVID-19 that address pay over the last month. Because Visiting Teachers, Nurses, Counselors, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Psychologists (in fact, all certificated substitute employees) are union members of SDEA while working for SDUSD, they are covered by the agreements, with specific provisions addressing how they will get paid during the closures.

Under the first agreement, substitute employees with long-term assignments that are supposed to last through any part of the closure period and any substitute employees that had confirmed day-to-day assignments during the closure period, will get paid.

Long-term substitute employees whose assignment was going to end during the period of the closures, along with day-to-day substitute employees who did not have any confirmed jobs during the closure period will be paid based on the average number of days per week they worked between January 6 and March 13, 2020. Under the second agreement, these pay provisions have been extended through the end of the year-round school year (July 21).

For some substitute employees, however, the closures may affect their income, due to not having worked much during the January through March period used as the base for calculating the “average pay” during the closures in the first agreement.

For those substitute employees, SDEA and SDUSD suggest applying for unemployment benefits through the [California Economic Development Department](#) (EDD), especially if they had more work in the prior year of employment which is used to calculate unemployment benefits, than they did in the January to March base period used to calculate the pay in the agreement between SDEA and SDUSD.

For more information, substitute employees should reach out to the EDD to see if they qualify for benefits.

As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolds, there may be changes that need to be negotiated between SDEA and SDUSD, and implemented, that affect substitute employees.

This is a fluid situation, and as more information becomes available, SDEA will be sending out updates to all certificated employee work and personal emails on file, along with updating the [SDEA website](#).

Earlier this month, the Schools & Communities First campaign announced the [submission of more than 1.7 million signatures of support to qualify for the November 2020 ballot](#) – the most signatures ever submitted in California for a ballot initiative.

This historic benchmark was achieved weeks ahead of schedule and surpassed the original 1.6 million goal set by the campaign.

SDEA members contributed significantly to the total, submitting nearly 4,000 signatures from our schools. This total surpassed our goal by 25 percent!

The importance of the Schools and Communities First Initiative, which would close loopholes around non-residential corporate property taxes that have stifled per pupil spending in California, has grown in recent weeks as the COVID-19 pandemic has created a crisis around the state’s budget should a prolonged economic downturn occur.

“We are witnessing the need for this very measure as educators, healthcare workers, first responders and communities as a whole grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on each one of our lives,” Kindergarten Teacher and CTA President E. Toby Boyd said. “The lack of resources has become ever-so-evident with so many students and families across California not having access to internet or computers. Schools and Communities First will help provide the resources our students, families and communities need for public education, healthcare, housing and public safety.”

The initiative would direct \$12 billion – \$70 million in SDUSD alone – every year to the most pressing needs in our communities, including critical local services and schools, while protecting homeowners, renters, and small businesses.

A recent [report](#) from the University of Southern California (USC) showed that every county in the state stands to benefit from the Schools & Communities First initiative, and polling has shown that the Schools & Communities First initiative is [supported by 58% of likely California voters](#).

**SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES FIRST  
MAKES HISTORY  
WITH MOST EVER SIGNATURES SUBMITTED**

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# EDUCATOR PROTECTIONS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In addition to ensuring members receive appropriate training and have access to all necessary equipment and resources, SDEA members will be allowed access to their worksite for at least one hour per month to collect items they deem necessary to conduct their distance learning program.

Both SDEA and District Bargaining Teams acknowledged the current impacts and potential future impacts this pandemic will have on our members and their families. Bargaining through this lens, the MOU offers flexibility and limitations to the workday. Educators will not be required to maintain a prescribed daily schedule nor be required to exceed a 240-minute workday, inclusive of direct instruction and flex time.

Educators have extreme flexibility on how they want to provide instruction, which includes not being required to use live video and control over the pacing of instruction. To this point, members will not be evaluated or disciplined based on their instruction or services provided in the distance learning model.

Although a full plan for Special Education has yet to be released, the MOU does require that the District provide secure distance learning tools for IEP meetings and guidance on completing IEP assessments, writing IEPs, and implementing the special education program prior to April 27.

“I believe the MOU addresses many of our concerns as we head into uncharted territory,” Silver Gate Elementary teacher and SDEA board member Kristin Brown said. “I respect that the district is supporting teachers by allowing them to choose which platforms to use and how best to implement technology into teaching and learning.”

“Teachers know their students better than anyone,” she added. “They must always be allowed to choose what works best for them and their students.”

Due to the fluid nature of this crisis, SDEA and the District may come back to the table and bargain over future changes.

The full agreement can be read [here](#) and a related Q & A can be read [here](#).

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# SCHOOL BUDGETS NEXT VICTIM

members signed a petition to place the Schools and Communities First initiative on the ballot in November. This initiative would bring much needed monies to our schools at a time we will be dealing with massive economic uncertainty.

## COMMON CRISIS AND COMMON RESPONSE

This common crisis that all school communities are facing will need a common response from educators in SDEA, uniting with educators throughout the state. Many other education unions are fighting for lower class size, more supports and competitive wages to keep our members. Considering this crisis members from across California will have to unite in common demands for our schools from our elected officials, whether they be at 4100 Normal Street, Sacramento, or all the way in D.C.

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