

# THE ADVOCATE

## Everyone a member in '96 and still strong!

When people stand together, we can achieve our goals. That statement is as true today as it was twenty years ago. It is hard to believe that it has now been twenty years since the SDTA (now SDEA) went out on strike to take a stand **against** the School Board's unfair practices, and **for** the students and staff of San Diego. Back then, the teachers of San Diego had gone five years, since July 1, 1990, without a salary increase even after substantial new revenues were coming in to the District.

SDTA members exhausted every avenue to try to negotiate a fair salary increase, new decision making power in the area of site governance, and even, can you believe, telephones in each classroom! But the District kept coming in with low-ball offers.

After spending months and months at the bargaining table fruitlessly trying to find a satisfactory agreement, the members of SDTA finally said, "Enough is enough!" On Friday, Feb. 1, 1996, SDTA's members took the most serious action possible: a strike.

Those brave educators who went out on strike were fighting for "Rights, Respect, and a Raise." A strong membership standing together during bargaining and during the strike

*See 1996, p. 2*



**Top: Striking SDTA members rally in front of the District office. Above: Marc Knapp, SDTA Vice-President in '96, leads the charge at Golden Hall.**



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# Letters in Solidarity

Lindsay Burningham  
SDEA President



Michelle Sanchez  
SDEA Vice President

## 2016 a crucial year for our union

We first want to start off by wishing a Happy New Year to all San Diego educators! We hope you enjoyed your well-deserved winter break and are returning to your schools, sites and departments refreshed and rejuvenated for 2016.

Next month is the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1996 SDTA Strike (February 1- 6) where the members stood strong and united for schools the students and educators of San Diego deserve. We would not have the strong contractual rights and working conditions we enjoy today without the members who held the line in 1996, and even as far back as 1918 when educators stood together to support fired colleagues and initially formed SDTA. We would not be before you today as leaders of SDEA had it not been for our mentors who welcomed us into the world of education and taught us the history and importance of union membership.

Reviewing 2015, we can see the amazing things that SDEA members and educators across our state and nation were able to achieve. Statewide, we continued to reap the benefits of our hard work in passing Prop. 30 with continued increases in school funding and continued educator and community member input into the implementation of the Local Control Accountability Plans. Across the country, educators stood together to gut NCLB and push our legislators to pass the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA will elevate the voices of educators in the policy making process, decouple standardized testing from high stake decisions, and create an

“opportunity dashboard” to help close opportunity gaps in needy schools. Locally, SDEA members stood strong and united to settle our 2014-2017 contract, which brings well deserved salary increases to our members and more supports and services that our students and educators need to build the schools we deserve.

Now, as we look ahead to 2016, we must remember those who came before us and taught us the importance of a strong union. We must continue to welcome new educators and share with them the stories of the past, so that we can build the unity needed to weather the storms ahead of us. There is a lot of uncertainty with the impending Supreme Court decision on the *Friedrichs v. CTA* case ([www.cta.org/friedrichs](http://www.cta.org/friedrichs)) and how that may impact our ability to collect dues and continue the work we do. There is uncertainty over education funding with the impending expiration of Prop. 30 and the need to continue to increase the resources our schools receive.

As we follow in the footsteps of the educators and labor leaders who came before us, we will continue to conquer the attacks that come our way and we will emerge a stronger, more united union of educators that stand together to protect the schools our students and communities deserve.

Together We ARE Stronger!

*Lindsay Burningham*  
**Lindsay Burningham**  
SDEA President

*Michelle Sanchez*  
**Michelle Sanchez**  
SDEA Vice President

### 1996

*Cont. from p. 1*

paid off for everyone. Teachers finally got that hard-earned raise, sites got more say in how they governed their school through a robust and contractual Site Governance Team (SGT), and yes, we even got a phone in each classroom! Moving forward from that time, we have continued to stand together, achieving lower class sizes, strong salary increases, maintaining some of the best health benefits in the state, and fighting for more

instructional time and less testing of our students. We have weathered the greatest recession since the 1930s and we are poised to continue fighting together.

Choosing to be a strong, committed, and active member of SDEA continues to be just as important today as it was back in '96. We weathered the storm back then, we stood together to fight, and we will continue to do so no matter what challenges come our way.

Together, we are stronger!

# Member perspective: What if we go 'right to work'?

Most of us signed on for union membership when we were hired without fully understanding what it meant or how fortunate we were. Many of us still do not understand why we pay union dues each month. After listening to the stories of teachers from Southern states at a recent NEA/AFT conference, I know exactly why it is important to participate in our union and pay our fair share. Southern states adhere to "right to work" laws. Virginia, Texas, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia have also outlawed collective bargaining. Keep in mind that collective bargaining is the process we used to win our Fight for 5. That's right. If we were in Georgia we would not have been able to negotiate for improvements to our contract through our union.

Teachers in the South serve with excellence despite lower wages, a lack of job security, and

increasing workloads. Teachers from the Charlotte area reported that their colleagues were leaving in droves to teach in South Carolina (30-45 minutes away), where they can make as much as an additional \$20,000 a year. Such a drastic difference in pay says that North Carolina districts do not value their teachers and are creating conditions for high turnover. To add insult to injury, teachers have to make up all hours that are missed due to inclement weather. Remember when our district closed schools due to the wildfires? We were paid for the time we were out of school without providing administrators with evidence that we were working at home.

Teachers in Texas also have it pretty bad. I was told about the Dallas Independent School District having 2,000 openings for teachers last year, after their superintendent



**By Rickeena Boyd, Home Hospital teacher.**

fired 400 teachers. The high number of vacancies may have also been a result of teachers fleeing after that school board's decision in the spring of 2012 to increase class size and extend the workday by 45 minutes. Because of the state's "right to work" law, teachers do not automatically join the union. This weakens their unions, because they have fewer people and dollars to organize a fight

with. This is the real goal of "right to work" laws: to take the power away from the people.

If the plaintiffs of the *Freidrichs* case win, then we could become victims of a similar fate. Our union may not have the strength to stop our school board or administrators from making decisions that create high rates of turnover, erode healthy workplaces and ultimately harm students.

## Iftin Charter bargaining update

Iftin Charter School educators are fighting for fair wages and a voice at work. They are fighting for the school their students deserve! Teachers at Iftin are paid tens of thousands of dollars less than their counterparts at traditional district schools and many other charters in San Diego. They receive no additional compensation for graduate degrees and have little voice in the governance of their school.

By organizing the union and fighting for a fair contract, teachers are working to return basic principles of democracy to their school. Thus far, management's response has made it clear that they are part of a charter school movement that believes schools like Iftin are "a business, not a democracy," as Iftin's corporate law firm Procopio stated in bargaining.

But teachers are fighting back to move the school in a better direction, organizing a delegation to the Iftin Board of Directors to call on them to provide real leadership and direct the management bargaining team to do the right thing.

"Not only has the attorney and management bargaining team proposed, twice now, to pay teachers less for working more, they have demanded that we not make any other improvements in areas like medical benefits and class size," said teacher and Bargaining Team member Liz Albertson to the Iftin Board. The teachers were scheduled to return to the bargaining table on Jan. 14, and with the Governor's recent budget proposal, expected to see a change in tone from Iftin management.



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All About

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- Borderline Diabetes
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- High Cholesterol
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- Loneliness Feelings
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### 2. Call A Health Coach.

If you check a condition.

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After you contact us, your VEBA Health Coach will call you back within 72 hours to start your coaching!



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- ✓ Become Stronger

