

# THE ADVOCATE

SAN DIEGO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

## UNION BUSTING AT GOMPERS PREPARATORY ACADEMY

At least 29 out of 67 teachers at Gompers Preparatory Academy were notified Monday evening that they will be laid off at the end of June as the school addresses a projected 10-percent decline in state funding – despite receiving \$2.65 million in federal COVID-19 stimulus funds.

The layoff notices included several vocal union activists, including multiple members of the union’s organizing committee and bargaining team, and comes on the heels of a recent ruling in the union’s favor by an administrative law judge at the California Public Employment Relations Board relating to charges that the school previously retaliated against union supporters and intimidated teachers to not support the unionization efforts.

Despite the school’s board of directors having not met since January, the notices would cut more than half the teachers in the school’s English and History departments and the entire Exercise and Nutritional Sciences (PE) department. As it stands, the school is leaving only four math teachers, five science teachers, five history teachers, and six English teachers, to serve the approximately 1,000 seventh through twelfth graders that they are responsible for educating.

“I’m concerned with the intent behind these layoffs,” said Bargaining Team Member Spencer Mills, an English teacher who received a layoff notice.

“The school claims they put students first, but this drastic move doesn’t show that when more than half of the English teachers have been laid off. How will the school attempt to successfully bridge the education and literacy proficiency gap without qualified English teachers?”

Members of the Gompers Teachers Association, which is affiliated with and represented by the San Diego Education Association, unionized in January 2019 and have been at the bargaining table without an agreement since April of that year. In December, teachers filed an unfair labor practice charge with PERB alleging retaliation, interference, and bad-faith bargaining.

“Our school prides itself in its stability and a strong educational culture,” said Vallery Campos, who has taught at Gompers for five years and received a layoff notice. “It is disheartening to see students being negatively impacted by this attempt to silence teachers advocating for improved learning conditions for both teachers and students.”

Gompers currently has numerous job postings and vacancies, including in areas where teachers were let go.

“There’s no doubt in my mind that the decision to let go of these teachers is just another attempt by the school to avoid their obligation to collectively bargain with teachers,” said Mills. “Ultimately it is the students who will lose as a result of this decision.”

## CORONAVIRUS’ ECONOMIC IMPACTS ON SCHOOL BUDGETS

In May, Governor Newsom announced that there would be a \$54 billion cut to the state’s budget because of revenue shortfalls. These revenue shortfalls are directly traced back to the economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, and the virtual total shutdown of the economy, the state was on track to experience a fiscal surplus, and an increase in school funding. But the dramatic turn in the state’s fortunes due the coronavirus pandemic now means that schools are grappling with massive budget deficits.

Under the governor’s plan, the biggest portion of schools funding, known as the local control funding formula (LCFF), is slated to be cut by 10%. The LCFF makes up about \$1.1 billion of SDUSD’s of the overall \$1.3 billion budget—in other words, a cut to LCFF is a big deal. Additionally, SDUSD was slated to receive almost 3% in increased LCFF funding prior to the pandemic. Under the governor’s plan, that increased funding has been shelved. That means that the governor’s plan will effectively implement a 13% cut to SDUSD’s main funding source. What does that mean for us?

The state’s budget has a direct impact on what we will be able to win at the bargaining table. SDEA members in the past year participated in bargaining input sessions that surfaced important issues that members believed in fighting for in the next round of bargaining. These items included things like lower class size and caseload, better pay, more staffing, and harmonized special education caseloads. Without a drastic turn-around in the state’s fiscal fortunes, those items will be obviously hard to achieve.

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# LETTERS IN SOLIDARITY

**KISHA BORDEN**  
SDEA PRESIDENT



**SCOTT MULLIN**  
SDEA VICE PRESIDENT

## REOPENING SCHOOLS MEANS INVESTING IN SCHOOLS

On March 13, SDUSD schools closed their doors for what many believed would only be a few weeks. Those few weeks have turned into months of sheltering-in-place.

Students and their families were forced to remain in their homes to slow the spread of COVID-19. During that time, SDUSD made the decision to provide a continuation of learning and support for our students. This included the distribution of over 40,000 computers and more than one million meals.

These unexpected expenditures cost the District more than \$30 million. Now that the traditional calendar is coming to an end, plans are underway to decide how to return to school in the fall. At the same time, the Governor has proposed a 10 percent cut to State funding for education. A 10 percent cut to the SDUSD budget would create a deficit of \$120 million for the 2020-2021 school year.

During the last few weeks of May, more than 140 school sites and programs across the district held union meetings. At these meetings, members shared what they would need to return to our school sites in the new school year.

The most common concerns were related to monitoring the health and safety of our educators and students. Many educators spoke to the need for daily health screenings for anyone entering a school site.

There is also a need for monitoring students and staff who may begin to exhibit symptoms once on campus. There has to be a health professional on site who is able to distinguish COVID symptoms from symptoms of other ailments. These health and safety protocols will require a school nurse on every campus, every day. There must also be a significant investment in personal protective equipment, such as gloves and masks, for every student and educator.

There were other concerns around support personnel. Because of the COVID crisis and the shelter-in-place orders, we know that many of our students have experienced some form of trauma

while being away from school. To address this trauma, those students are going to need on-going mental health supports provided by school counselors and other mental health professionals.

Another issue of great concern for educators was the need for daily cleaning and disinfecting of classrooms and workspaces, at the very least. Keeping our schools safe will require more custodians and cleaning supplies to keep up with the increased cleaning and disinfecting that will be required.

Every single issue that educators cited as a non-negotiable, has a price tag attached. It does not take a mathematician to see that the numbers don't add up. If public education is not a priority in our state and federal budgets, there is no way to provide the essential supports and equipment needed to safely return to our school sites.

We must be part of the conversation and advocacy at every level. Making sure the funding is in place to open schools safely is not going to be easy. It is going to take actions from educators in several spaces — in Congress, in the State Legislature and at the ballot box.

Call (855) 977-1770 to speak to your elected officials and let them know how important it is to properly fund our schools. After a brief statement from CTA President Toby Boyd, you will be connected to your legislator. Ask them to pass a budget with no cuts and no educator layoffs. After you reach out to your lawmakers, please ask your colleagues, parents and other stakeholders to take action too. If you have already called, call again. They need to hear from every educator. We must stand together in this pivotal moment.

**Together we are stronger!**

**KISHA BORDEN**  
SDEA PRESIDENT

**SCOTT MULLIN**  
SDEA VICE PRESIDENT

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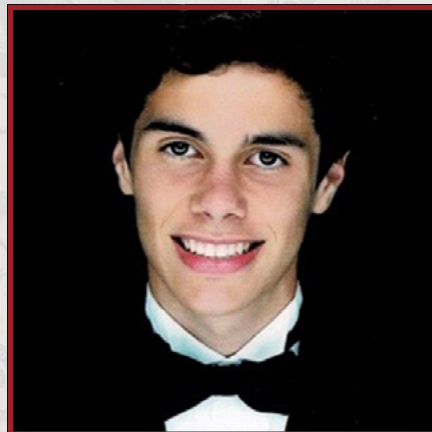
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# SDEA

## 2020 SCHOLARSHIP —RECIPIENTS—

SDEA annually offers scholarships for members and members' dependents. The Dependent Application is for graduating seniors and current college-enrolled students, who are dependents of a current SDEA member. The Member Application is for current SDEA members who wish to further their education.

**JOSHUA COX**



Joshua Cox is a graduating senior from Scripps Ranch High School. Joshua will be studying Engineering at Purdue University.

**CARYS ERVING**



Carys Erving is currently majoring in Social Ecology at the University of California Irvine.

**KELLI HAGAN**



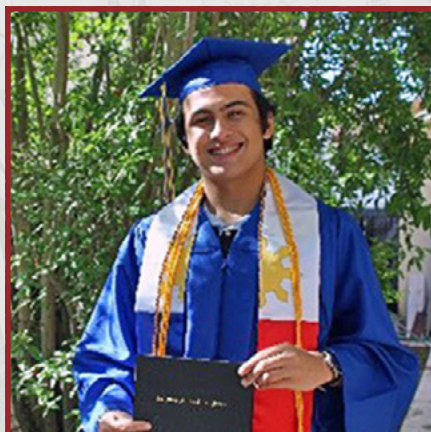
Kelli Hagan is a member and is currently a teacher at Sherman Elementary. Kelli is continuing her education to receive her Master's degree in Education at University of San Diego.

**JOHN HAYS II**



John Hays II is a graduating senior from Patrick Henry High School. John will be studying Aerospace Engineering at San Diego State University.

**TYLER JACOBS**



Tyler Jacobs is a graduating senior from Mira Mesa High School. Tyler will be studying Mechanical Engineering at San Diego State University.

**PENELOPE POLLARD**



Penelope Pollard is a graduating senior from Ramona High School. Penelope will be studying Public Health at Tulane University.

**MICAH SELBY**



Micah Selby is a graduating senior from University City High School. Micah will be studying Social Science at San Diego State University.

**NEIL SLAVICK**



Neil Slavick is currently majoring in Liberal Studies at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

**EMMA TALIA**



Emma Talia is a graduating senior from Serra High School. Emma will be studying Rhetoric at the University of California Berkeley.

**SASHA WONG**



Sasha Wong is a graduating senior from Coronado High School. Sasha will be studying International Relations at the University of San Diego.



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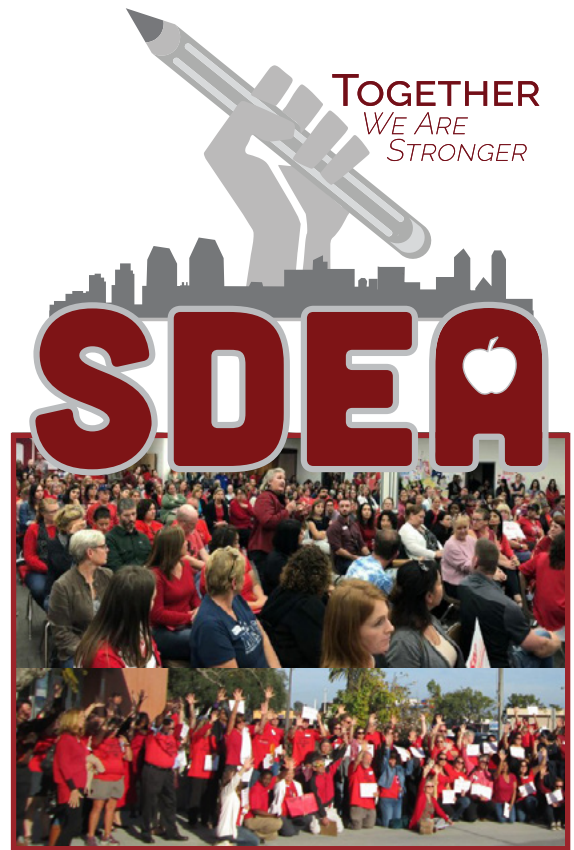
## ECONOMIC IMPACT ON SCHOOL BUDGETS

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Currently, the state's legislature and the governor are in their annual budget deliberations that precede the passage of the budget. It should be noted that the state legislature has largely rejected the governor's education budget cuts, in anticipation of receiving federal bailout funding. However, that federal bailout funding is anything but guaranteed at this point, as it is dependent on the fractious governing bodies in DC deciding to bail out America's schools.

Earlier in May, SDEA President Kisha Borden led a delegation of other large school districts education union presidents in meeting with speaker Nancy Pelosi's education policy director. These leaders made it abundantly clear that without a

significant federal bailout, similar to the bailouts received by large corporations, that our schools would experience significant labor turmoil as we wrestle with the ramifications of the budget cuts that we are facing. Shortly after the US House of Representatives passed the HEROS Act, which will help respond to the economic impacts of the pandemic. If passed by the Senate, this legislation would send significant amounts of money directly to schools, in addition to helping shore up the broader state budget. At this point we are entirely dependent on the passage of a federal bailout package in ensuring that we do not have massive negative impact on our budget, and by extension our schools.



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