

THE ADVOCATE

Hundreds rally to protest SDUSD's layoffs

As you are most likely aware, the San Diego Unified School Board voted unanimously on March 6, 2012 to issue layoff notices to eliminate nearly 1,700 educator positions throughout the District. The District is playing a budget game in which the School Board issues layoff notices in the spring and then calls educators back to work in the fall, just like we have seen in past years. We all know that this budget game hurts everyone involved—kids, parents and educators—by tearing apart school communities. The state of California will not approve its final budget until June and because of this, the District is budgeting in the dark. Until the state passes its budget, there is no way to know how much state money will be allocated to the SDUSD. The School Board knows that this system is broken. They also know that if thousands of educators are laid off, they

can't open our schools next fall. On March 6, hundreds of SDEA members, students, parents and concerned citizens rallied at the District office. Together, we called on the District not to issue these unnecessary layoff notices and to do the right thing by working with us to fix this broken budget system. We will continue to call on the District to work with us to protect our schools and the future of public education. We as educators need to stand strong during these difficult times and fight together to demand the Board immediately rescind these unnecessary layoff notices. Please make sure you are in contact with your Association Representative (AR) and stay informed as we work through this together. Together we are stronger!

—Bill Freeman
SDEA President



Mission Bay High School turned out the largest contingent for the March 6 rally, following on the heels of a grassroots site-based rally organized at MBHS that same morning by AR and SDEA Board member Barry Dancher and CR Luis Villanueva.



Hundreds protested the School Board's decision to issue unnecessary layoff notices to one in four educators.



Garfield High School CR Gary Edmonds (center) says "No more!" to layoffs.



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District issues false choice to employees

Budget! Budget! Budget! I'm sure you are as sick of hearing it as I am. However, it is a reality of our times today. I first want to state that it is a shame that our kids have to fight for financial crumbs to finance their education. Children should not have to worry about whether there will be enough money to bring educators back to teach them next year. This is truly as sad state of affairs, in a nation where the wealthiest 400 individuals make more money than the bottom 150 million people combined.

As you know, the threat of budget cuts happens every year at this time. Unfortunately, along with the budget predictions comes the issuance of pink slips. Does the District have financial problems? While it is certainly possible, the problem is that we just don't know, and neither does the District. One of my greatest concerns is that as we near the time to receive our fairly negotiated raise, the District is attempting to make lasting decisions without an accurate assessment of where it stands financially. Again, I want to be the first to say that while the District may have financial problems in the future, we just won't know until accurate budget information is released later this year.

We all know what the District is attempting to do by issuing this false choice between pink slips and raises by virtue of the fact that they are drastically over-noticing so many educators based on even the District's own data. There is obviously an attempt to frighten and divide educators into giving up their fairly negotiated raises, increasing healthcare cost, increasing class size and continuing furlough days.

It saddens me to think that the reason why most of us dedicated our lives to teaching the students



Letters in Solidarity

Bill Freeman
SDEA President

of this nation is being taken advantage of. It goes without saying that while our decision to become educators wasn't based on making a lot of money, we certainly shouldn't be losing money. Educators don't talk about the money they invest in their classrooms or how much they spend on their students by purchasing school supplies and even clothes to keep students prepared to learn. Many educators work long hours into the evenings preparing for class as we grade papers, write plans and develop activities to ensure that our students achieve to the best of their abilities.

We can't blame what financial problems may exist solely on the District. We Californians must take some of the blame for where financing of public education is today. We too, as educators, must get involved in the decisions made about public education and make sure our voices are heard. Educators have stood on the sidelines for far too long and watched changes being made to education without their input. This will continue to happen if we don't become active participants in shaping the policies and decisions governing education. This is especially true today with so many non-educators attempting to reform education. We must stand up together if we are ever to fix this broken system.

Bill Freeman

Bill Freeman
SDEA President

Crawford members demand democracy

As the School Board moves Crawford High School from a small schools model to one comprehensive high school, Crawford union members have been concerned about who calls the shots in the creation of their "new" school. It was announced by Area Superintendent Shirley Wilson that names would be drawn from a hat to create an advisory council to help shape the new school. This didn't sit well with union members. After all, advising doesn't carry the same power as actually making decisions, and drawing names from a hat didn't seem like a very good democratic model. Moreover,

they knew that if administration creates an advisory council, then administration makes the rules for the council. It's hard for educators to hold power on a council that's controlled by administration.

Union members at Crawford swung into action and quickly drew up a petition. The ARs collected signatures from members and delivered the petition in a delegation to Wilson. The petition said that decisions about changes to the instructional program should be made through shared decision-making on the elected site governance team. To not do so would

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SDEA hosts organizing training for NEA members

Dozens of participants from the NEA's Pacific Region Leadership Conference joined SDEA members last month for a unique training experience, as educators from across the country went into the field to develop their organizing skills.

The two-day practicum started with a training session covering the power of organizing. Using the example of SDEA, participants were taught the power of building a large, and more importantly, united voice throughout a school district. After the initial training session, the participants split into two groups—one for a community organizing track and the other for a charter school organizing track.

The community organizing track started their second day of training at the SDEA office, where they discussed the importance of encouraging parents to become involved in their child's school and work in tandem with educators to improve public education. The urgency of doing so has been heightened by legislation such

as California's Parent Trigger Law, which allows parents to petition to turn certain schools into a charter. Preventing the conversion of these schools can only happen if educators are able to organize parents before outside groups can do the same.

In order to apply these skills in a practical manner, teams of one NEA member and one SDEA member traveled to the City Heights and Perkins K-8 neighborhoods to have one-on-one conversations with parents. The teams quickly realized that parents were extremely eager to discuss their child's school when an educator was standing at their front door. These conversations served as a way to not only inoculate parents against the threat of the Parent Trigger Law, but to start to build a powerful relationship between parents and educators.

The charter school organizing track also focused on the need to build relationships and organize those outside a district's school sites. Participants were taught about the need to embrace ahead



NEA members from around the Pacific Region joined SDEA members in a weekend parent outreach organizing blitz.

established charter schools and attempt to organize educators at those schools. These schools drive down the standards of the teaching profession not because of their existence, but because the educators at those schools are not unionized. This barrier cannot be broken without building relationships with the educators at those schools.

The teams assigned to the charter school organizing track then traveled to the homes of charter educators. They were then able to have one-on-one conversations with these educators about what is important to them, an important first step in building

a relationship between those who work at district schools and those who do not.

The biggest outcome of the training was in educators from other parts of the country realizing that they too have the power and ability to organize once they return home. Even SDEA members learned that they can have a monumental impact in the communities around their schools just by reaching out to others. As groups returned from the field, one-by-one they shared their stories of how well they were received at doorsteps, and how easy and natural the conversations became.

What are my rights in regards to submitting lesson plans?

The SDEA union contract refers to lesson plans in very few places, mostly in Article 14: Evaluations. June 16, 2005, SDEA and SDUSD

agreed to an MOU that clarified longstanding misunderstandings about the requirement for lesson plans. An MOU (Memorandum

of Understanding) is a negotiated and legally binding agreement between two parties that has the same standing as the union contract.

The lesson plans MOU makes several points and clarifies when and how lesson plans can be required. According to this agreement, lesson plans can be required *at times* and for a specific, *identified need*. This indicates that a unit member cannot be required to submit daily, weekly, or monthly lesson plans.

An administrator must identify the purpose, frequency, and duration that lesson plans will be required to be submitted. Members will receive feedback, either verbal or written, that is pertinent to the identified purpose. The MOU also grants members the *right to use their own format for lesson plans*, unless the administrator and member *mutually* agree to a standardized format that will be used. Should mutual agreement not be reached, the MOU also outlines a process

that will be initiated to reach mutual agreement, including going up to the joint SDEA/SDUSD Contract Administration Committee. If members are having difficulties with an administrator about the submission of lesson plans, they need to contact and work with their site AR immediately, who can then solicit assistance from SDEA staff if necessary.

The MOU can be found at the SDEA website for membership review.

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Crawford

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not only be bad for the school, the petition said, but it would also violate the union contract and so be a grievance.

Oftentimes administration responds to grievances by trying to draw out the grievance process, but not this time. The petition, signed by about 96% of union members at Crawford, sent a strong message to administration: We're united, we want a solution, and we don't want to wait for it! Wilson moved to resolve the issue right away by calling a meeting with the ARs from each of the four small schools. Wilson agreed to abide by the union contract by honoring the role of the site governance team to make decisions about changes in the instructional program at Crawford. Congratulations on an organizing victory, Crawford union members!

SDEA scholarships available now

The deadline to apply for an SDEA scholarship is Friday, May 4. Scholarships are available to SDEA members and members' eligible dependents. Applications are available online at www.sdea.net.

Save the date: Day of the Teacher!

SDEA will celebrate the Day of the Teacher on Wednesday, May 9 at 4 p.m. at the SDEA office. There will be raffle prizes, food and drinks, great company, and just as last year, the opportunity to get active around the issues that are impacting San Diego's educators this year. We'll see you there!



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SDEA Conference Room

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