

# THE ADVOCATE

## District class size increases are not necessary

SDEA educators know that small class sizes are key to improving student learning. Smaller classes sizes allow for the development of a student's potential and ensure individual attention to each student.

Research supports what we know from experience: Students learn more effectively in smaller classes. According to a study by the Public Policy Institute of California, five of the state's largest school districts, including SDUSD, reported significant student performance gains since the state's class size reduction program began. There is clear evidence that smaller class sizes raise student achievement, and the positive effect is even greater in schools serving predominantly low-income students.

So why is SDUSD planning to raise class size in their "attrition model" for staffing next year?

Many Districts use attrition to address declining enrollment and the loss of program funding *without* raising class size. Attrition may result in movement of educators from overstaffed to understaffed sites, or in the elimination of certain positions. Attrition-based budgeting also means that financial planners take into account that when the District does need to fill a position, it will likely do so with an employee at the bottom rather than the top of the salary schedule, resulting in savings.

SDUSD's proposed model is different from a typical attrition model. Our School Board also wants to raise class size. The District's plan involves a hiring freeze, as well as increasing class sizes, in order to address their "projected" deficit and meet reporting obligations to County Office of Education, despite not yet knowing how large next

year's funding increase will be.

The San Diego community voted to temporarily increase their taxes to support education, passing both the statewide Proposition 30 and the local Proposition Z. In exchange for their votes, they expect to see our classrooms stabilized—not a continuation of the staffing roller coaster we've all suffered through together for the past several years.

Yet our District is continuing their habit of "doom and gloom" budgeting. Thanks in large part to the efforts of SDEA members, the passage of Props. 30 and Z means that the "doom and gloom" budget is far less gloomy than it has been. But that doesn't change the fact that the District is yet again making spring staffing decisions assuming a worst-case scenario that has *never happened* in the fall.

Who suffers from this

decision? Certainly educators do. But it is our students who are most harmed by the District's unnecessary and destabilizing staffing approach.

Right now, our District is fostering a trust deficit with its staff and with the San Diego public. Generating unnecessary excess pools is not only disruptive for educators, but for instruction, students and the community—and that is something that none of us can afford any more of.

As a solution, the District should adopt a more measured attrition approach. The Board should direct Human Resources to wait to base their decisions on more accurate funding information from May's state budget revision (which arrives well in advance of the contractual excessing deadlines), and then the final adopted state budget in June. *Now is the time for the District to do the right thing.*

## High stakes testing protests sweep the nation

Sparked by a grassroots movement of teachers at Garfield High School in the state of Washington, educators nationwide are raising their voices in protest of high-stakes testing. GHS teachers' decision to not administer the MAP test (similar to the CST) has led to a close examination of such tests.

Educators have long objected to the weight that standardized tests like the MAP and CST are given in evaluating everything from student learning to school performance to classroom teacher effectiveness. While SDEA has resisted the nationwide attempt to link test scores to evaluations, many other

have not been so successful. In Louisiana, test scores count for a full half of evaluations. But the good news is that educators are fighting back. One of the primary issues fueling the recent Chicago teachers' strike was the use of test scores in evaluating teacher performance.

SDEA has joined the

groundswell of protest, with our Rep. Council unanimously passing a motion to support GHS teachers. As our state shifts from the CST to the new Common Core assessment, and as SDEA heads into bargaining next year, it has never been more crucial for members to be educated and vocal about this issue.



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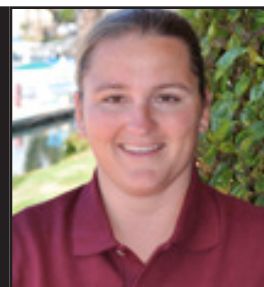
**ACCOUNTING ASST./SECRETARY**

Nanette Najera



# Letters in Solidarity

Bill Freeman  
SDEA President



Lindsay Burningham  
SDEA Vice President

## Let's use layoff respite to build strength

SDEA Members,

Strong educator unions with active members can accomplish many things. SDEA is strong, and we have saved members' jobs, bargained strong rights and working conditions in the contract, secured fully paid health care for members and their families, and, just as important, protected our students. We have come together to elect an education-friendly School Board and organized to pass funding propositions in the state.

These actions are never easy. Unions across the state have struggled with declining membership and loss of benefits over the past five years. Teaching standards are under attack from "reformers" intent on tying test scores to evaluations, weakening due process and redirecting resources away from schools. Today's attack on public education is unprecedented.

Working collectively, SDEA has successfully advocated for our membership. However, we must continue to organize and fight for our students. For the first time in years, our educators and families won't have to endure the stress of pink slips. Now is not the time to sit back. Instead we must use this time to build a stronger voice and develop a stronger

union.

As we begin to see the light at the end of the tunnel and look forward to the restoration of raises and the elimination of furlough days, we also need to begin to prepare for contract negotiations in 2014.

The first steps will be seeking input from members and developing our bargaining proposals. SDEA is beginning to reach out to members to construct a Bargaining Commission, and other committees necessary to involve members in the bargaining process. We must ensure that we have strong sites capable of two-way communication with strong member engagement structures in place. It is important that every site have an elected and active Association Representative who can be part of the bargaining campaign.

It is now time for us to look forward. Let's use this time wisely and strengthen our union by coming together to strengthen our voices, our union, and our future.

*Bill Freeman*  
Bill Freeman  
SDEA President

*Lindsay Burningham*  
Lindsay Burningham  
SDEA Vice President

## Members build their advocacy skill set

Our rights at work are like a muscle; they grow stronger when we exercise them. How do we use the union contract to make our jobs better? How do we know if our rights have been violated? What is a grievance and what are the steps? What is the role of an AR/CR in a grievance meeting? ARs, CRs, and other members came together for an intensive, full-day training to discuss the answers to these questions and become better advocates for their union sisters and brothers. Your AR and/or CR may have attended SDEA Core Training,



See *TRAINING*, page 3

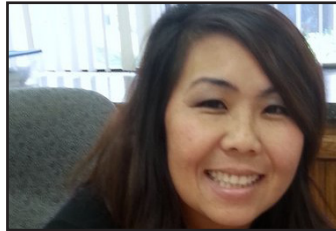


# Training

Cont. from p. 2

Part I: Advocacy previously, but please join us in acknowledging these ARs, CRs and member activists who dedicated their time to the training this year. They make our union stronger!

Augustine Evans, ALBA; Adina Sobo, Morse HS; Amy Blatt, SDHS; Barbara Tucker, Clay El.; Bob Mihalik, PBMS; Bridget Kyi, Lindbergh-Schweitzer El.; Charlotte Truesdell, Paradise Hills El.; Christina Boyd, Bethune K-8; Christine Misoni, Henry HS; Donald Wood, PBMS; Donna Pilkington, SD Met HS; Elka Adams, University HS; Jared Enyard, MBHS; Jennett Rivera, Dailard El.; Jenny Ronco, Henry HS; Jose Valencia, Longfellow El.; Julia Knoff, SRHS; Lindsay Burningham, Scripps El.; Lucia Stone, Adams El.; Manuel Gomez, Chollas Mead El.; Martha Klages, Boone El.; Matt Welander, SCPA; Randy Bosch, Visiting Teacher; Ray Adair, CPMA; Roberta Sanchez, Lindberg-Schweitzer El.; Ta Davies, Emerson El. Preschool; Tracy Whitt, Jerabek El.; Vivian Griffin, Freese El.; Yazmin Holton, Rolando Park El.



Bob Mihalik (PBMS) and Ta Davies (Emerson El. Preschool).

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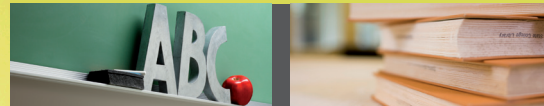
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**Find Your Gym at Work.**

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- **Strengthen:** Sitting or standing, tighten your core for 30 seconds then release. Do this as often as you can throughout the day.
- **Cardio:** Walk or stand as much as possible, avoid short-cuts and take the stairs.

\*Don't forget to drink water throughout the day.

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