Let’s say no to layoffs and yes to L.E.A.R.N.!

District administration is creating a budget crisis to push through cuts that are bad for kids. They are planning to layoff 1 in every 8 educators, get rid of enrichment classes, and slash supports for our neediest students. Creating an environment of panic and instability is an opportunity to push through the cuts and reorganizations top administrators want, but that parents, educators and our school communities oppose.

These cuts are based on worst-case predictions, and they’ve been wrong every time. District administration doesn’t really know what its budget will be until June. Right now they are just guessing, and they have a long history of guessing wrong. Last year their budget was off by 48%, and in 2014-15 it was off by 94%! That’s $79 million! That’s why we are fighting back against teacher layoffs and slash-and-burn cuts.

Educators have a better plan for our schools. Educators aren’t getting distracted by this inflated crisis—and we don’t want parents to be, either. To move us forward, we’re launching a campaign to fight for a union contract that gives our kids and our schools the resources they really need.

Let’s join the contract fight to L.E.A.R.N.!

Lower class size! Lower class sizes for every classroom means our students will get the attention they need to learn.

Expanded enrichment classes! Kids need art, PE, music and more to learn and grow. Plus, the time kids spend in enrichment classes gives their teachers time to plan and prepare.

Attract and keep the best teachers! Our kids deserve the best, but San Diego educator pay is near the bottom half of all educators in the county. That’s why we’re fighting for competitive pay and benefits.

Resources for kids! We need more wrap-around resources, like counselors, nurses, and special education support, to make sure all of our kids get everything they need in order to learn.

No destabilizing schools! We want to start off the school year with teachers in place and ready to teach — no more last minute changes. Staffing policies should create stable schools and be fair.

Top: SDEA members flooded School Board meetings on Feb. 21 and 28 to demand no layoffs and no slash-and-burn cuts. Center: SDEA members stood strong while Crown Point Elementary School teacher Angela Rieke described the negative affect the proposed cuts would have on our students. Above: Mission Bay HS teacher Jared Enyart brought his three “budget priorities” to the meeting, calling on the School Board not to punish students for their fiscal mismanagement.
No, it is not “just a notice”!

It has been a very busy few weeks since our February Advocate article. Although it has been very stressful, know that your fellow SDEA members, leaders and staff have been working hard to ensure our contract is enforced and District decisions don’t harm our students and educators.

As the details of the District’s proposed slash-and-burn budget cuts to programs across the SDEA bargaining unit have emerged, many of us have found ourselves in shock. On Feb. 28, the SDUSD School Board voted to issue over 800 layoff notices to SDEA unit members. These 800 are in addition to hundreds of notices going to our colleagues who are classified employees, administrators and school safety personnel.

These cuts will impact student support services, preparation time educators, and content area experts, just to name a few. These layoffs are based on a hypothetical worst-case scenario that itself is based on a draft budget that won’t be revised until May and finalized until June. We know that there are better ways to resolve budget challenges through retirement incentives, natural attrition, reducing administrative costs, and full-fledged efforts to reduce declining enrollment.

The Superintendent and others have told us that these are just “notices” and we shouldn’t over-react, but many of us have received these “just notices.” We know what it is like to get the envelope in the mail with the “accusation.” We know what it is like to feel that our employer doesn’t value and respect the countless hours and blood, sweat and tears we put into our jobs and your students. We know what it is like to go to work every day and put a smile on our faces, when we don’t know if we will have health insurance or being able to pay the rent. We know what it is like to still go to work every day and put a smile on our faces, when we don’t know if we will have health insurance or being able to pay the rent.

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The contract provides members with a variety of short-term leave options, including the following:

- **Sick Leave (Section 10.2)**
- **Personal Necessity Leave (Section 10.3)** – A member can convert up to eight full salary sick days to use as personal necessity leave, under one of the nine categories listed in the contract. A new right negotiated in 2015 is the ability to use up to 10 sick days for paternity/adoption leave.
- **Paternity and Adoption Leave (Section 10.5)** – Members get one day off for fathers/spouses/partners upon the birth or adoption of his/her child. Newly expanded rights from 2015 now allow for the ability to utilize up to 10 sick days for paternity/adoption leave.
- **Bereavement Leave (Section 10.15)** – This leave is not charged to a member’s sick leave bank, and allows for a total of five paid days off for each death occurring in the member’s or their spouse’s/partner’s immediate family (as defined in Section 10.16).
- **Family Care Leave (Section 10.19)** – This is unpaid leave, but maintains a member’s benefits. It can be intermittent, and is for the purpose of childbirth/adoption, care of an ailing family member, or for the member’s own serious health condition.
- **Family School Partnership Act Leave (Section 10.20)** – This leave is used to participate in school activities of a member’s child. Up to 40 hours a year, and eight hours a month can be used, but it must be used as either personal necessity or personal business leave, vacation (for Child Development Center Teachers), or time off without pay.
- **Jury Duty (Section 10.21)** – Jury duty is paid leave, not credited from a member’s sick leave bank. Members have the option to defer jury service to intersession periods, and can get paid for such a deferment.

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