

THE ADVOCATE

SAN DIEGO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION



SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATE

—TWO STEPS FORWARD, ONE STEP BACK—

Over the past several months, educators from across the District have taken action on issues surrounding special education. Although we have seemingly made great gains through our collective action, there are some recent setbacks.

On February 11, special educators, paraeducators and parents marched on Superintendent Cindy Marten’s office to deliver complaints educators were filing on behalf of more than 100 students. This was in direct response to these students not receiving the special education services they are entitled to in their IEPs because of understaffing.

Just one week later, on February 18, Superintendent Marten issued a letter highlighting last year’s advocacy efforts to make special education a priority. She acknowledged that the work to improve support for students with IEPs is not over.

Superintendent Marten committed to train paraeducators, address the hiring shortage, advocate on the state level for special education funding, and design a feedback process so members can address concerns related to staffing to meet the needs of IEPs.

Part of this letter also addressed the outstanding unionwide caseload grievance filed in the fall on behalf of Mild/Moderate Education Specialists not receiving stipends or proper site allocation for caseload overages. Since this letter, SDEA leaders have met with SDUSD management to resolve this grievance.

We are close to achieving a settlement which will pay stipends for identified Mild/Moderate Education Specialists who have more than 20 students assigned to them, allow for additional individuals who have

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EVERY SEASON IS A BARGAINING SEASON

California law prevents union contracts, like the one between SDEA and SDUSD, from exceeding a term of three years.

But it probably seems like we’ve been at the bargaining table every year, and you may be wondering why that is!

The answer is simple: SDUSD is usually unwilling to settle on important cost issues, like wages and class size, in a three-year contract. Their rationale boils down to the fact that they typically don’t know what their budget will look like three years into the future.

This conundrum usually leads to us having to agree to a two-year deal, and then coming back for re-opener bargaining for the final year of the contract. Add the District’s usual foot dragging at the bargaining table into the mix, and you’ve got a recipe for every season being bargaining season.

In this season of bargaining, the SDEA Bargaining Team decided to not open the health and welfare benefits article of our contract. This was done strategically in order to avoid the District going after our current health and welfare benefits.

The District had the option of opening that article for renegotiation, but surprisingly the District decided to not open on any articles! This means that our health and welfare benefits article is not up for discussion in this round of bargaining. Other areas up for discussion will be greatly impacted by the state’s budget.

Governor Gavin Newsom’s proposed budget is estimating a 2.29 percent COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) in base funding for next year. However, the District’s budget is based on a revenue assumption of a 3.0 percent COLA.

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LETTERS IN SOLIDARITY

KISHA BORDEN
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SCOTT MULLIN
SDEA VICE PRESIDENT



HAVE YOU JOINED THE SDEA PAC?

SDEA's strategic plan illustrates that we are engaged in a battle on multiple fronts for the schools our students deserve.

We must build organizational power to bargain a strong contract that addresses the needs of our educators and schools.

We must build our political power so that we are equipped to elect a pro-public education school board. That political power will also be wielded to pass the Schools and Communities First initiative that will infuse more than \$12 billion dollars into California's schools, public services, and neighborhoods. As you see, our success on two of these fronts heavily depends on building political power as an organization.

Our Political Action Committee (PAC) is at the center of this political power. The funds generated for the PAC are for non-partisan local elections and ballot initiatives that impact our schools and classrooms directly, and almost entirely come from voluntary contributions from SDEA members and supporters.

The good news is that we aren't starting from zero. At the start of the school year, about 10 percent of our members were donating monthly to the PAC. At this year's Union Academy in October, we asked our site and program member leaders to make a commitment to our PAC. By the end of the day, we had increased

our PAC membership by about 25 percent!

That is a great start, but it is not nearly enough to fight the battles we have ahead of us. We must have the necessary resources to protect our schools from privatizers so that we can play a major role in the campaigns to win the funding our schools need and deserve.

That's where you come in. I'm asking that you join me and the hundreds of SDEA PAC donors in this political fight. If enough of us come together and contribute together, we will have the resources we need to elect lawmakers who truly care about supporting public education and our students. We will have the resources to lead the way in the fight for increased funding through Schools and Communities First.

This month, when your AR comes to you with the PAC donation form, take a moment to consider what we can accomplish by working together. Think about how your small contribution could play an important part in creating the schools our students deserve. Together, we can make a difference in the politics of our city and our state. **Together, We Are Stronger!**

KISHA BORDEN
SDEA PRESIDENT

SCOTT MULLIN
SDEA VICE PRESIDENT

CONTRIBUTING TO OUR POLITICAL SUCCESS

Earlier this month, SDEA-endorsed school board candidates Sabrina Bazzo, Dr. Sharon Whitehurst-Payne, and Richard Barrera finished first in their respective school board primary elections.

Each will move on to the November ballot's districtwide election to serve on our school board.

As we head into bargaining and working for the schools our students deserve, we must continue advocating for a school board that shares our values on public education and ensuring our union has the resources to campaign for endorsed candidates.

This means we also need to raise money to the SDEA Political Action Committee (PAC) to support friendly candidates. Most of the funds raised by the SDEA PAC come from voluntary donations from SDEA members. Both SDEA governing documents and election law limit the use of these funds to only local non-partisan offices and ballot measures.

SDEA has been successful in using PAC funds to protect our school board, having supported a pro-public education majority for more than a decade. But this can change in the blink of an eye if billionaire donors who push privatization support our opponents as has happened in Los Angeles and other parts of the state.

While wealthy supporters of school privatization have written six-figure checks to influence other school board elections, SDEA members rely on small contributions from each of us to protect our schools. Regular donations from 6,000 educators will always beat a large donation from a billionaire!

Just skipping a couple lattes each month to contribute to the SDEA PAC helps our members build political power to advocate for San Diego schools. For more information and to contribute to the SDEA PAC, speak with your site Association Representative.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

JURY DUTY

Have you received a jury summons in the middle of the school year and wondered if you should take time off to serve or postpone it to the summer?

Section 10.21 of the union contract provides SDEA members with certain rights pertaining to jury duty leave. Knowing these rights will help you make the best determination for when to perform your civic obligation to serve on a jury.

The contract provides for two options when you get a summons. You can either choose to serve during the school year at your regular rate of pay, or you can postpone your service until the summer and perform the service on an off-duty day, with additional pay.

If you do not wish to disrupt the educational program at your school, and

opt to postpone, you will need to complete and submit to your site administrator a jury duty postponement form, with your original summons attached. These forms should be available from your site timekeeper.

When you fulfill your jury duty service by reporting, you will need the court to validate each day of service and submit that verification as well.

You will be compensated at 75 percent of the daily visiting teacher rate per day of jury duty service (see Appendix D of the union contract for the rate, which is available on the union's website).

Also, be aware that if you are assigned to teach summer or extended school year (ESY), those are actual duty days, and you would have to postpone service to non-duty days before or after summer school or ESY.

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SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATE

—TWO STEPS FORWARD, ONE STEP BACK—

been over caseload to report their overages, and not require balancing when case managers are clearly over caseload. Additionally, there will be a monthly joint monitoring process for the remainder of the school year to handle future issues.

Although these are big wins for Special Education educators across the district, it seems the tables have once again turned. Just before printing this issue of The Advocate, SDEA got wind of what the District has in store from members working in departments out of the central office.

Moving forward to next year, the District is planning to make

significant changes to Adaptive Physical Education, Early Childhood Education, Early Childhood Special Education, Non-Public Schools, and the School Psychology program. We will be engaging in impacts and effects bargaining in the coming weeks.

As Superintendent Marten stated in her letter, “together we can create amazing schools where students and staff thrive.”

Unfortunately, this shakeup is not a good place for our students with special needs and special education educators to thrive from. Superintendent Marten CAN and MUST do better!

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EVERY SEASON IS A BARGAINING SEASON

This lower than expected revenue proposal from the governor may present some challenges at the bargaining table. But the bottom line is that the District is essentially getting a 2.29 percent raise in its funding from the State. But keep in mind that as the budget bill works through the legislative process there's a chance the COLA may get closer to the 3.0 percent that was initially estimated.

Now the District has proposed layoffs to a small targeted group of members because of their skittishness about the budget. No matter how small the overall layoff number, it's a big deal to the individual member who is laid off. Our plan this year, as ever, is to fight each and every layoff.

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SDEA SPRING ELECTIONS BEGIN MONDAY, MARCH 23RD

SDEA members will have the opportunity to vote for SDEA Officers, Board Members, Local CTA State Council and NEA-RA delegates from March 23 through April 3.

An electronic voting link will be sent from Simply Voting to the personal email address on file with SDEA.

To confirm or update your personal email, contact the SDEA Elections committee at sdeaelections@sdea.net. The option to vote by paper ballot will be available at the SDEA office on weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. during the election window.



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CTA membership comes with many great benefits including access to the only CTA-endorsed Disability Insurance plans from Standard Insurance Company (The Standard). Now, at no extra cost to you, when you protect your paycheck with CTA-endorsed Disability Insurance from The Standard, you can get access to two new benefits from CTA:*

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HEALTHY SNACK IDEAS TO FUEL YOUR WORKDAY

It's easy to get sidetracked from your healthy eating goals at work – donuts in the breakroom in the morning, leftover treats in the afternoon, that tempting candy bar during the mid-day slumps.

The key is snack time. Here are some ways to make the most out of your workday snacking:

- ❖ Keep healthy snacks handy in your desk. Good options are unsalted nuts, fruit, whole grain crackers, pretzels and granola bars.
- ❖ Opt for foods high in fiber and protein.
- ❖ Eat every 3-5 hours to keep hunger at bay. For most, this means grabbing a snack a couple of hours after each meal.
- ❖ If you are active, make sure your snack has about 200-300 calories per serving to fuel you. Less active folks should keep their snacks under 200 calories.



Want to learn more about healthy eating? VEBA offers free nutrition classes and healthy cooking demos to all members. Come to our Healthy Reboot program for an introduction to all of our free well-being services. Spots are available for this popular program starting in April. Go to vebaonline.com to RSVP today.