

THE ADVOCATE

Building our Union. One Rep at a time.



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STOP THE PRESS

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AUTUMNAL ACTION



photos by Nanette Najera and Steve Johnson

Cover: SDEA Association Representatives gave up a Saturday to attend the Fall Leadership training on Oct. 3. ARs in photo are attending the Know Your Contract session, becoming experts in our collective bargaining agreement (see story, page 8).

Above: Teachers work together at the New Association Representatives session at Fall Leadership.

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SDEA-R: GOING DIGITAL

SDEA-Retired is now accessible via the SDEA website.



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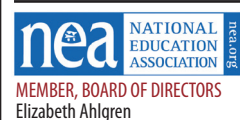
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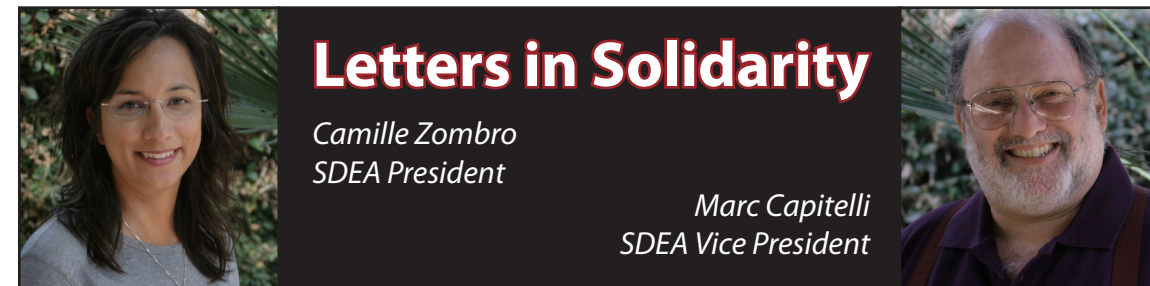
ACCOUNTING ASSISTANT/ SECRETARY

Nanette Najera



SDEA Mission Statement

The members of SDEA are dedicated to providing a quality public education. As a professional union advocating the interests of certificated staff, students and the community, SDEA/CTA/NEA will implement its membership commitment through involvement in politics, building coalitions, negotiations and grievance advocacy and educational programs.



Letters in Solidarity

Camille Zombro
SDEA President

Marc Capitelli
SDEA Vice President

Matching our model to our mission

SDEA Members—

2009 is a good year to be an educators' union.

Does that sound like an odd statement to make?

Consider the following:

- In this past year, we restored the jobs of our sisters and brothers who were laid off in 2008.
- We successfully seated three school board members who **committed** to fighting for the things we believe in.
- We survived year two of the worst economic downturn in generations with **no** layoffs, **no** salary rollbacks, **no** healthcare cuts and **no** furlough days.
- We collected thousands of signatures in just a few weeks to stand up for our schools and against the tyranny of our now-former superintendent.
- We continue to work every day to ensure that every child in every classroom receives the highest quality education by fighting class size increases, advocating for curriculum that makes sense, and pushing back against unreasonable workload demands that ultimately hurt kids.

Despite the picture of eternal gloom being painted by those who manage districts statewide, SDEA continues to demonstrate that even (if not especially!) in times of economic hardship, we can fight successfully to protect one of our nation's most valuable resources: public education. We know that standing together is much easier than standing alone. And we are doing this by *getting organized*.

In 2007, the SDEA Representative Council passed the "Continuous Organizing Resolution," in which we attempted to answer some basic questions about our union:

- How does the daily work of SDEA members, leaders and staff make us stronger?
- How does our work unite us?
- What practical steps must we take to be a more effective union?
- How can we become a more democratic and inclusive union?

The answer to these questions is simple, though

the implementation is complex: Unions are stronger, more democratic, and effective when they have an informed, active and educated membership.

Based on the concepts of that resolution, we have been working to build a stronger union by shifting from what unions call the "business model" to an "organizing model." Business unions spend their time and resources enforcing contract language and limping along while staff and a few top leaders make all the major decisions, and members are only called upon to mobilize behind the big fights. Conversely, an organizing union is built from the relationships and priorities of members, who work together to build power and a collective voice—from day-to-day concerns to the most pressing national and state-wide issues. To use an analogy, we committed to building a better fire department, instead of just fighting fires and reacting from one crisis to the next.

But the realities in our classrooms belie our success. Changes in special education programs are not only frustrating already-overworked special and general educators, but leaving our neediest students without critical support. Class size increases are creating chaos through excessing and large classes in under-equipped classrooms. Nurses, counselors, librarians and other non-classroom staff are being cut, shuffled and disrespected as their work is shifted to non-credentialed staff or eliminated altogether.

With an expired contract—the longest since the 1996 strike—we have so much work to do. It's easy to stop what we're doing, to react to our changing environment, and to abandon our commitment to building a better fire department. We know the rumblings. Why aren't we holding big rallies? Why aren't we grabbing media attention? Why aren't we spending more time and energy lobbying the state?

The fact is that the unions that focus their resources on the politics and the big splashes ignore the day-to-day realities at their own peril—and they invariably fail to build the kind of real power that can withstand the challenges being piled on our public education system. Here in San Diego, we have SDEA members who are afraid to ask for even the most basic necessities like a bathroom break or a place to

See *LETTER*, page 15

NEA benevolence brightens Balboa

After months of planning, NEA's Outreach to Teach program descended on Balboa Elementary on the weekend before the NEA-RA. Over 300 other college students, teachers, retired educators, higher education faculty and education support professionals grabbed hammers, shovels, brushes and mops to repair, landscape, paint, clean and redecorate Balboa Elementary.

The auditorium looked like a staging ground for an invasion as it was stuffed with new furniture, lunch tables, window blinds, paint and hundreds of materials needed to transform Balboa into

a visually inviting place for children to learn. Close to \$100,000 from donations and NEA support helped the volunteers accomplish the goal.

Usually the project has some wiggle room, but since Balboa is a year round school everything had to be completed in *one* day. It was transforming to see the school bright and welcoming as the volunteers came back on Monday to visit with the children and staff and to share with each other their gratitude both as a participant in and recipient of the project.

Before



After



photos courtesy of Marc Capitelli

Politics as unusual: NEA comes to SD

The NEA Representative Assembly was held in San Diego this summer, for the first time in the 150-plus year history of our national affiliate. In all, nearly 10,000 delegates were in attendance, representing every state in the US plus several international guests and affiliates of Education International, NEA's international affiliate.

As the host city, several active and retired SDEA members helped with CTA in organizing a productive and fun event. We helped with security, tourist advice, registration and in many other areas. SDEA's delegation at the NEA-RA is among the largest in CTA, comprised of about 50 local delegates plus several more elected by the state.

The business of the RA included policy changes and new business items which addressed NEA's positions on various national issues. CTA also held a protest and march to the state building, standing up against the drastic cuts our schools continue to face.



photos courtesy of Willie Jones and Erin Andreason Kole

Clockwise from top: 1. SDEA delegates show off their "Together We are Stronger!" t-shirts at the NEA-RA. 2. Retired SDEA member Willie Jones (left) at the NEA-RA. 3. Team SDEA after a hard day's work representing educators on the national stage. 4. CTA Director Jim Groth (left) and NEA Director/Morse High School teacher Elizabeth Ahlgren (center) smile as they participates in a CTA protest march. 5. Teachers take their message about the California budget to the steps of the state building.

Portrait of an Impasse: SEA fights and wins

by LAUREN MCLENNAN
Sweetwater Education Association

At the time of this writing, the Sweetwater Education Association (SEA) is now in the process of reviewing a tentative agreement that came as a result of post fact-finding hearing mediation. Our organization efforts finally pushed the school board and the Sweetwater Union High School District's bargaining team into actually bargaining in good faith for 21 hours. After almost a year and a half of attempts to negotiate and a few months of very strategic and strenuous organizing, it appears our work may yield beneficial results for our members.

Early in the process, the road to where we are today wound past the School Services of California. This is an agency that makes recommendations to districts and school boards about bargaining. Their recommendation for our current bargaining term was the following:

"The strategy this year may be to exhaust impasse proceedings as quickly as you can, giving you the ability to impose your last, best and final offer. We recognize that this strategy is risky, both in terms of costs to the district and the employer-employee relationship."

Sweetwater's school board took this advice to heart and thus far it had appeared to be working for them. They knew from the beginning that this strategy would damage, perhaps irreparably, its relationship with SEA members, but they were willing to make that sacrifice. From the beginning, our school board and superintendent had no intention of bargaining in good faith to achieve a fair agreement; they have been biding their time, waiting for their opportunity to impose a contract. In all our months of negotiations, the district has not made any counterproposals. The district's refusal to bargain led to fact-finding—a last stand in the bargaining process.

The school board's "last, best and final" proposal included a litany of "take-backs," and while they claim to be making adjustments for budget cuts, their proposal, with the exception of the increase in staffing ratio, would save them *no* money in the

See SWEETWATER, page 10



photos by Camille Zombro

On Oct. 7 Sweetwater Education Association members rallied to support their bargaining team during fact finding. SEA members were supported by educators from throughout the County, including a delegation from SDEA.

The War of the Words: Members confront U-T

One of the more common questions from SDEA members is why the Union doesn't respond to the negative information printed about us in the ironically monikered *San Diego Union-Tribune*. This is an excellent question. Why is it that when our city's only remaining major daily paper runs a cartoon depicting our members as a torch-bearing lynch mob (as they did in September) or accuses our leadership of attempting to take over the School District (as they did in August), the Union appears to be mute on the subject?

The answer is quite simple. Whereas the motto of the *New York Times* is "All the News That's Fit to Print," the unofficial motto of the *Union-Tribune* has generally seemed to be "All the News That's Fit to Further Our Agenda." Despite submitting editorial after editorial written by respected SDEA members, each of which was in direct response to content printed in the *Union-Tribune*, the editorial board has simply, flat-out refused to print anything we send in.

SDEA doesn't believe that the *Union-Tribune* has any obligation to devote their editorial page to lauding SDEA. But we do believe that in a democratic society, a newspaper has a precious charge to serve as a public forum for debate over the pressing ideas of the day. Debate — implying more than one side. Indeed, in this spirit of public parley, the *Union-Tribune* as a matter of course actively solicits and prints editorials from writers who represent opposite sides of a wide range of contentious issues. And yet the paper has not only opted to avoid showcasing multiple viewpoints on education issues, but has in fact refused to print divergent opinions when they are independently submitted. This seems to indicate that perhaps the paper's goal was not to foster civil discourse about issues facing our city, but something else entirely.

Long owned by the Copley family, the financially flailing paper was recently sold, and the incoming owners hired a new publisher, Ed Moss. In the hopes of crafting a more constructive relationship with our local paper, SDEA members set up a meeting with Moss to discuss concerns regarding the paper's unwillingness to print educators' responses to the blistering coverage we receive.



photo by Erin Clark

From left: SDEA members John Kennett, Gary Jimenez, Kim Oliver-Vacha, Camille Zombro and Bill Freeman stand together after meeting with the publisher of the *San Diego Union-Tribune* to share concerns over the paper's coverage of our Union.

The meeting with Moss was attended by five SDEA members — special education teacher John Kennett, Pacific Beach Middle School math teacher and Teacher of the Year Kim Oliver-Vacha, Clairemont High School journalism teacher Gary Jimenez, Montgomery Elementary School teacher and District Teacher of the Year Bill Freeman, SDEA President Camille Zombro, as well as SDEA Contract Specialist and former District history teacher Erin Clark.

Oliver-Vacha used the opportunity to meet with Moss to passionately defend educators throughout the District. "The *Union-Tribune* showed a complete lack of respect for the classroom teacher and the work we do," she says. "I referred Ed Moss to an article that was written about Race to the Top, implying that people who didn't support merit pay were supporting mediocrity. I told him children weren't widgets and that just because I didn't want to work on commission didn't mean I was a mediocre teacher, and that maybe he ought to spend a day in my classroom and see how hard I work all day every day before he calls me mediocre."

Kennett, who has had letters to the editor published in the past, believes that it is incumbent upon educators to defend ourselves when our Union is attacked. "When we, the Union, are unfairly criticized we need to go to the source of the criticism and find out what the problem is," he says. "It does not matter if the offending party is an anti-union paper, a misguided

and/or misinformed politician or District administrators. When SDEA, 'the teachers union' or Camille is attacked, it is really an attack on us all because *we are* the union."

Jimenez, who spends part of every day teaching teenagers what journalism is supposed to be, concurs. "Silence is a form of consent," he says, and encourages other SDEA members to communicate their discontent with the paper. "If we as teachers, or I as an individual, sit back and allow the Union (hating) Tribune to spread their contempt for teachers and misinformation without responding, I deserve the corresponding public backlash. I was so angry about the way the paper was trashing teachers I was ready to lead a boycott of the paper. I urge more people to speak up."

Despite our initial pessimism, the meeting appears to have resulted in a meaningful dialogue about the role of the newspaper in providing a forum for educational discourse. Shortly after meeting with Moss, SDEA was contacted for the first time to participate in a point/counterpoint about Race to the Top with County Superintendent Randy Ward (available at <http://www3.signonsandiego.com/stories/2009/sep/18/not-race-be-won/?opinion&zIndex=167807>).

While one editorial hardly constitutes a policy sea change on the part of our local paper, it is a good start. The future of public education is one our nation's most crucial issues. San Diego's educators have earned the right to have a voice in the conversation.

SDEA FALL LEADERSHIP



SDEA Field Organizer Jonathon Mello, center, works with new reps at the New Association Representative session.



SDEA Board Member Erin Andreasen Kole and SDEA President Camille Zombro facilitate a brainstorming session.

With a new school year upon us, the challenges we face as a union are many. In order to enforce our contract and build a stronger and more effective union, we all rely on our very dedicated Association Representatives. They are the eyes and ears of the union at our school and program sites. In order to more effectively carry out their duties as union representatives, over 130 ARs, CRs and Site Organizers (including over a dozen new recruits) attended the Fall Leadership conference this year, held at Marina Village on Saturday, Oct. 3.

The unspoken theme was, "It's all about site organizing." As every year, Fall Leadership is the place where ARs and other union leaders come to brush up and build their union representation skills. This year's conference was also the place where reps had the chance to give their input as to how they would like to restructure the Representative Council meetings. Listening sessions were scheduled into the conference, based on grade levels, to determine what the restructuring would look like, and to address the training needs of the ARs for the coming school year. Melody Welch, an AR from Tierrasanta Elementary, summed it up best: "The morning [listening] sessions were invigorating! We spent the time collaborating on how to make the Rep. Council more productive and useful."

This year's Fall Leadership also included a series of electives that reinforced the "site-based organizing for power" theme. Creative Organizing Tactics, Organizing for Power, Tools for Organizing and Building Power at Work were just some of the electives offered this year. The sessions were conducted in various ways, from panel discussions to collaborative group work. New ARs were introduced to their responsibilities and rights in the New AR Training session, and many reps dove directly into the contract, addressing hypothetical situations that might arise at school sites during the Know Your Contract session.

This year's Fall Leadership laid a strong foundation for the year ahead. As Stacie Klages, an AR from Golden Hill Elementary said, the conference proved "very informative and useful, very worth attending... essential." Karen Toyohara, an AR at Crown Point Elementary, expanded on this point, expressing that this conference was an "excellent experience... the insights I gained, the reference materials I received, the sessions I attended will all prove to be extremely valuable to me as my site's AR."

It is at the sites where our union strength resides, and having well-trained union representatives ensures that all of our rights that we have fought for and won are protected and enforced.



Barry Dancher (Mission Bay High School), Kisha Borden (Zamorano Elementary), Beatrice Corona (Burbank Elementary), Giulia Zizzo (Burbank Elementary) and Allison Voet (Burbank Elementary) share their site organizing strategies and experiences in Building Power at Work: A Panel Discussion from Sites that Got It Right.



Association Representatives Kim Oliver-Vacha and Jackie O'Donovan present at the Creative Organizing session.



photos by Nanette Najera and Steve Johnson

Labor Council Secretary-Treasurer Lorena Gonzalez motivates ARs, CRs and Site Organizers after a day of training.



"Building power can only be done by personalization. This session showed us ways to be collective and creative as we turn up the heat!"

—Sandy Gonzales
Crawford IDEA

"Great training! Great location! Great food! Great company!"

—Martha Klages
Boone Elementary

"The reps are amazing, giving up a Saturday with no pay, just so they can do their volunteer job better!"

—Elizabeth Ahlgren
Morse High School/NEA Director, District 10

"I really liked Melody Welch's suggestion for how to improve Rep. Council: Questions. Not stories."

—Erin Andreasen Kole
Marshall Middle School/Board Member

Letters to the Editor

Educator challenges former Superintendent's spin

Editor—
I wonder if our recently departed Superintendent appreciates the irony of his enthusiastic review of Hess and West's paper on collective bargaining. At a time when teachers are goaded, and face the near certainty of actually being bribed, into focusing their efforts on the sole pursuit of one right answer, the nuance, wisdom and grace of excellent teaching are fast becoming irrelevant. We are, in a frightening sense, expected to efficiently create widgets that can bubble accurately. Human accuracy bears increasingly little relevance in today's computer-driven, creativity- and synthesis-demanding society, yet we narrow our curriculum more and more each month in its exclusive favor. "Reformers" have standardized, dehumanized and programmatized the education process to unprecedented levels.

that we have reduced the curriculum to such low-level, behavioral-skills that a computer could be a more effective teacher than an actual human being. Perhaps we are not "are interchangeable cogs" yet, but it shouldn't be much longer... Executing classroom replicas of the "old factory model" is exactly what teachers are expected to do, so why shouldn't our collective bargaining comport with all of this reverse momentum toward the Industrial Revolution?

Only those who have demonstrated the courage to stand up to the colossal economic and political forces pressing us back have any modicum of credibility in criticizing collective bargaining as out of step with the modern era.

As a teacher and a parent, how I hope the next Superintendent will speak from the moral high ground.

—Michelle Montali
SDEA Member

The former Superintendent recently shared his glee at findings

Retirees express appreciation for union membership

Editor—
Association ties are timeless. Recently I received this letter from a retired SDEA member and was deeply touched. For years, SDEA-R has been challenged with attitudes that send SDEA retirees out to pasture. Many of us believe we still have much to offer the education community as well as support for our active SDEA brothers and sisters, no matter how big or small. I wanted to share this letter with you:

acknowledge with gratitude my appreciation to you, the retired SDEA staff, for continuing to send me copies of The Advocate, which I enjoy tremendously. Though crippling arthritis increasingly limits many activities, I still have good vision and good hearing—now in my 80s! Reading about my profession—your pursuits, challenges and accomplishments—is a gift from you. Blessings, Theresa Zang"

—Norma Heeter
SDEA-R President

"Greetings, President Norma J. Heeter: This memo is to

Sweetwater

Continued from page 6

immediate future. The money they may have saved in the long run is really a pittance when compared to the overall budget of the largest secondary district in California. The district's reserves are exceedingly above the required percentage and it could well afford to buy down the staffing ratio. Nevertheless, they proposed a permanent increase and have already violated our current contract by imposing the new ratio.

Their other take-backs seem to be small issues when looked at individually, but when we looked at them as a whole, we realized the goal was to divide our membership. They wanted to attack certain smaller constituencies within our membership in the hopes of pitting us against each other. When we saw this attempt at division, we knew we had to build even greater unity and show our members that we have to stand up for each other and not allow our power to be diminished through attacks on unique groups.

However, our greatest revelation came when we fully comprehended the strategy they were employing. We realized that if we, as an association of professionals, did not stand up to violations of our current contract and imposition of a new contract, we would continue to experience this type of bargaining—which is essentially no bargaining. If the district's use of this recommended strategy turns out to be successful for them and they are able to

impose, what would their motivation be to bargain in the future? None. If they can impose a contract that ignores member rights, divides the association, and creates inequalities, what would our future hopes be of a contract that is favorable to us? None. Imposition of their version of a contract would signify the beginning of a new era in collective bargaining and public education. Our salaries and benefits would erode, our class sizes steadily grow, our schedules would be set at the whim of the district, and our rights chipped away. Our association would become irrelevant and obsolete.

So how have we navigated through the process thus far? First, we made organizing our highest priority. In a few short months, we found people who were creative thinkers and others who were passionate and willing to do the work. We drew out a plan to increase the intensity and frequency of activities and we took our plan to the members.

Our organization was only successful because we enhanced our communication with members to make it more effective and frequent. We found innovative ways to keep members informed, even when they would rather not be, at all stages of the bargaining process, and we went beyond the traditional "flyer." We were more creative technologically and we put the issues in terms that were easy for all stakeholders grasp.

By standing together, SEA has shown that solidarity and commitment can lead to better teaching and learning environments, even in times of budgetary strife.

Welcome to... SDEA/CTA/NEA/AFL-CIO

Over the 90-year history of SDEA, we have enjoyed a long-standing positive relationship with the Central Labor Council, but without a formal affiliation we were unable to have direct influence on labor support for local political candidates. This left SDEA isolated from the rest of the labor community in the region.

Last June, the SDEA Representative Council voted to affiliate with the AFL-CIO under NEA/AFL-CIO Labor Solidarity Partnership Agreement. This national agreement allows NEA local affiliates to formalize our relationships with the larger labor movement by becoming formal members of the AFL-CIO. SDEA is now the largest NEA affiliate to join. Other locals include Hayward, Oakland, Inglewood and Redlands in California as well as Seattle, Beloit Wisconsin, and Jefferson County Tennessee, and about a dozen others.

The benefits of our new affiliation are real and tangible. We now have 15 seated delegates at the Central Labor Council, meaning we can take part in the debate and vote on who the Labor Council will support in upcoming elections. New and viable candidates for political office are being actively recruited by Central Labor Council leadership, and our presence is helping

to build confidence in the diversity of the labor movement in San Diego. Some of the strongest unions in California are part of our labor council, including the California Nurses Association, the American Federation of Teachers, Service Employees International Union and United Domestic Workers. We are proud to stand as equals with our labor partners.



This September, the AFL-CIO held its national convention, which only occurs every four years, and SDEA was represented. Highlights of the convention included a speech from President Barack Obama, the election of a new President of the AFL-CIO (Richard Trumka) and the first ever address by an NEA President to the AFL-CIO, when NEA President Dennis Van Roekel spoke to delegates on Sept. 15.

In the months ahead, expect to hear more news from unions around the county and to see a significant labor presence at SDEA actions and events.



Barbara Thompson, Tim Vedra (Beloit EA), SDEA President Camille Zombro and Tom Goodkind (University of Massachusetts Professional Staff Union MTA/NEA) represented three of the eighteen NEA locals who affiliated with the AFL-CIO through the Labor Solidarity Partnership Agreement.



Lorena Gonzalez (San Diego/Imperial Counties Central Labor Council) speaks about healthcare reform and immigration rights.



Camille Zombro with Dennis Kelly (UESF) and Dennis Van Roekel (NEA President). This was the first time a president of NEA has spoken to the AFL-CIO, and the first time pure-NEA affiliates were seated delegates at the convention.



Doug Moore (United Domestic Workers, San Diego) speaks about immigration rights in labor.

photos courtesy of Camille Zombro

Remember to Vote!

SDEA 2009 Fall Online Special Election

For the Election of:

SDEA Officers

Secretary – Partial, 1-year term (2009-July 2010)

Treasurer – Partial, 1-year term (2009-July 2010)

SDEA Board of Directors

Seat 4 – Elementary (Lincoln, Mission Bay & San Diego) 2-year term

CTA State Council Delegates seat(s):

10 – Partial, 2-year term (2009 – June 2011)

13 – (2009 – June 2012)

17 – Partial, 2-year term (2009– June 2011)

19 – Partial, 1-year term (2009 – June 2010)

Instructions

Local: For SDEA Local Voting Instructions, please send SDEA your personal email or register on MY CTA. If using MyCTA, log in prior to 2009 Fall Special Election to ensure no problems. The member CTA number is on the mailing label of the members' CTA California Educator magazine.

Timeline

Deadline for Nomination (Rep. Council)	Oct. 21
Deadline for Campaign Statements and Fliers	Oct. 23
Election	Nov. 5-18
Deadline to cast ballot (online or mail no later than 5:00 p.m.)	Nov. 18 (*receipt)
SDEA Ballots online and/or paper counted by election vendor	Nov. 18-22
Election Cmte. verifies election results	Nov. 23
Candidates Notified of Results	by Nov. 23

Local Candidate Statement

**2009 Fall Online
Special Election for
SDEA Officers
(Secretary and Treasurer, 1-year term)
&
CTA State Council
(Seat 10 – 2-year term,
Seat 13,
Seat 17 – 2-year term
and 19 – 1-year term)**

Please note:

This form must be returned to the SDEA office NO LATER THAN 5:00 p.m., Friday, **October 23, 2009**. Please refer to Election Procedures or call SDEA at (619) 283-4411 if you have questions.

Local Candidate Statement forms are available at SDEA and on the website (www.sdea.net). Statements are limited to **250 words for SDEA Officers and ONLY 25 words for CTA State Council**.

Name: _____

Site: _____ School & Fax Number: _____

Email: _____

I am a candidate for (SDEA Position): _____

Statement (Please email to Moreno_L@sdea.net also):

Received by: _____ Date: _____



CTA website full of resources

The CTA website is full of information about many current issues. Located at www.cta.org, the website gives you the opportunity to do all of the following:

- Join in the fight against the new Race to the Top program. This federal program has been established to provide funding for a merit pay program based on test scores. (Unfortunately, the State of California legislature is on board with this program.)
- Sign up for a scholarship for a Winter 2010 CTA Conference at www.cta.org/conferences. The deadline to sign up is Friday, Oct. 23. Several different types of scholarships are available. The conferences include the Equity and Human Rights Conference, March 5-7 in Irvine, the Urban Issues Conference, February 26-28 in San Jose, and the Good Teacher Conference (South), March 12-14 in L.A.
- Acquire tips on preventing H1N1 flu.
- Apply for the GLBT Safety in the Schools grant program.

Complete information and the application form are available online.

- Find CTA on Facebook!
- View the interactive *California Educator* magazine.
- Review the resources available for Breast Cancer Awareness Month.
- Learn about resources available to members through the CTA Disaster Relief Fund.
- Become aware of CTA positions on upcoming legislation.
- Provide your input on the 2010/11 CTA budget.



Jim Groth
CTA Director, District P

A newly designed CTA website will soon be online. Watch for the special announcement.

Jim Groth may be contacted via email at jgroth@cta.org.

Who will the real dropouts be?

The September NEA board meeting was an interesting one. For the first time, I was able to get an appointment with Congressman Duncan Hunter. Due to committee work and a floor vote, my normal visits with Bob Filner and Susan Davis were with staff members rather than the House members. It is with great pleasure that I share the fact that four of the five members of Congress from our County have signed to cosponsor HR 235, the bill that will repeal the penalty of social security offsets. Darrel Issa is the lone member who has yet to get with the program.

In Washington, it's all about health care. At NEA, it's all about the Race to the Top regulations. Education Secretary Arne Duncan came to our board meeting to make a few remarks and answer our questions. There has been no progress on the reauthorization of ESEA, which most of you know as NCLB, but the Race to the Top program makes NCLB look benign. Forty states are chasing the money that will be awarded to, at most, 10 states. The regulations require that states have data systems which tie student progress to individual teachers and principals. Can merit pay be far away? It can if we all dig in and get busy.

Duncan didn't get any questions about charter schools but he has altered his message to say he supports good charter schools and good public schools. He talked about the disparity that shows in the learning readiness of kindergarten students: while some children enter school ready to read, some don't know which way to hold a book or don't even know their real name, only a nickname.

The Secretary spoke about the number of drop outs every year in this country, a staggering 2.1 million per year, that no longer have hope for positive opportunities in their lives. That is his motivation in trying to change the system so quickly. Will the Race to the Top program change the drop out rate? I don't think so and it may cause some of us to drop out!

Elizabeth Ahlgren may be contacted via email at elizahlgren@yahoo.com.



Elizabeth Ahlgren
NEA Director, District 10

Brave new world: SDEA-R is going digital!

SDEA-Retired is now on the web! Thanks to SDEA Advocate Editor/Contract Specialist Erin Clark, SDEA-R is now linked to the SDEA website. Retired members and others can now go to www.sdea.net and click on **SDEA-Retired** to access pertinent information.

As of Nov. 1, 2009, SDEA-R members must contact SDEA-R and indicate their preferences as to whether they wish to receive the SDEA Advocate in hard copy, or only access it online, or choose to no longer receive The Advocate at all. The cost of producing and mailing over 800 Advocates as well as the time and effort it takes retiree volunteers to label and stuff The Advocate with retiree information has lead the SDEA-R Executive Committee

to take this action. SDEA-R members can fill out the insert in the September Advocate or download the form from the website link. Remember, Nov. 1, 2009 is the deadline to receive member preferences. As of that date, those members who have not responded will no longer be mailed The Advocate.

The SDEA-R Executive Committee would like to express appreciation to Gail Lopes, the retiree volunteer coordinator, and all the other retirees who volunteer to label and stuff The Advocate each month.



Norma Heeter
SDEA-R President

Letter

Continued from page 3

move their classrooms in 100-plus degree heat. Top administrators and site principals disrespect us with top-down mandates, crushing workloads, and program changes that make no sense to front-line educators. We're forced to implement instructional programs we know aren't what's best for our students.

A big rally won't help our members stand up for our students and for the respect we deserve in our buildings and with our site administrators. That day-to-day courage can only be built when SDEA members have the space and the support all of us need to build a stronger union. An empowered school where members stand together and earn the respect of administrators is where SDEA is headed. We deserve respect because of the incredible job we do, but it is seldom that easy. In order to address the issues that we face every day, we must continue our commitment to growing into the union we need to be.

In the upcoming months our organizers and Board members will work with site teams across the District to help you build the union where it lives—in your building! Building a strong SDEA begins with you, with your work, and with your commitment. Thank you for all you do.

In Solidarity,

Camille Zombro
SDEA President

Marc Capitelli
SDEA Vice President

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SDEA in Action



Left: SDEA's Summer of Action included a delegation on the labor coalition's Pride at Work float at the San Diego Pride Parade in July. For information about participating in upcoming SDEA action events, make sure to keep an eye on the calendar at SDEA's new website, located at www.sdea.net.



Keep sharing your thoughts!

Until we have a contract, we will be wearing our red SDEA shirts to show that together we *are* stronger. Send in your red shirt photos to be featured in *The Advocate*! Please include contact and caption information with photo submissions.

Advocate questions, comments and submissions may be directed to advocate@sdea.net.

photo courtesy of Roberta Sanchez