

# THE ADVOCATE

## WHILE OTHERS WAIT FOR SUPERMAN A SURVEY OF THE LANDSCAPE

Perhaps the most interesting thing about a recent screening of *Waiting for Superman* was the audience it drew. School Board trustees, parents, union members, business community representatives, students, administrators and reporters lined the building. This motley crew had one thing in common: we all care about our students and how to make our community's schools the best they can possibly be.

The second most interesting thing about the *Superman* screening is what it portends for SDEA members. Public education is under attack. Our schools are underfunded, understaffed, and our students' needs are underestimated. Ask any teacher, principal or parent and you'll hear the same: Our schools need help! *Superman* symbolizes the worst response to this reality. Replacing structural analysis with maudlin, misguided attacks on teachers' unions, the film glosses over

reality (e.g. the greatest concentration of U.S. "drop-out factories" are in regions with lowest teachers' union density; more charter schools under-perform than over-perform non-charters) and leaves film-goers with the hazy feeling that someone, somewhere needs to be fired.

But teachers unions have historically and consistently fought most ardently for the changes that have made public schools *better*—lower class size, stable funding, safer learning conditions, and wages and benefits that attract and retain college-educated professionals. Voices calling for the destructive sort of reform so ineptly advocated by *Superman* pose a threat to the very existence of public schools and teachers' unions. Destroying this bulwark of stable, middle-class jobs hurts, not helps, our students, our schools, and our communities. Teachers' unions can and should be reform *leaders*.

### HOW SHOULD EDUCATORS RESPOND?

SDEA members have a brutal reality to face. The interests aligning behind attacks on teachers' unions and public schools are not going away. The debate over our schools' futures is quickly being framed for us. We need to make a decision, now, about how to respond. There seem to be three choices: 1. Do more of the same. 2. Concede, concede, concede. 3. Take the reins on reform, and do it right.

Choice number one means continuing to say "no." No to stepping outside our comfort zone, no to conversations about systemic educational change, no to putting the muscle of our union behind efforts that expand beyond the meat and potatoes of our contract—wages, benefits, conditions of employment. Saying "no" has worked for us 'til now, but loud, well-funded voices on both sides of the aisle are now calling the question. The right to collective bargaining is a law on the books—our very existence as a union may be under threat.

Distressingly, the second choice seems to be the most popular in

unions across the country. When other teachers' unions engage in reform conversations with their employers, the sad pattern is that they give away their contracts. Pay stability, due process and other core rights fly out the window. SDUSD's current Board has committed to a "hands off the contract" reform approach. If we decide to participate in such conversations with *our* employer, we must continue to make it clear that "conversation" and "concession" are two very different words. We have a closed three-year contract. Period.

That leaves us option three. If we can no longer stick our heads in the sand, and we are committed to protecting our hard-fought union rights, we find ourselves in uncharted territory. The District is not calling for a Blueprint—a "what"—but an organizing plan—a "how." If the purpose of unions is to give us a voice at work, this option is an opportunity to use that voice to reframe reform conversations around what makes sense for our kids, our schools and our communities.

### OTHERS CAN WAIT. SDEA IS WILLING TO ACT.

SDUSD has learned the hard way that one man can't save a school system. Our "Superman" left the District bruised and bitter. Perhaps what we need is a Justice League—a collective of superheroes all battling on behalf of our children, our public schools, and the stability of America's middle class. Lofty as this may sound, **there is no reason it is not possible if we are committed to making it so.** There are two important upcoming action opportunities for SDEA members regarding school reform (see right). SDEA members, it is time for us to act! Our own futures and the futures of our students depend upon it.

#### DIANE RAVITCH SPEAKING EVENT

Ravitch, author of *The Death and Life of the Great American School System*, will discuss the promise of real reform and the problems of NCLB at Madison High School on Nov. 3 at 5 p.m. (See [sdea.net](http://sdea.net).)

#### SDEA ENVISIONING SESSIONS

Shortly after the fall election SDEA will be launching a series of Community Schools Reform envisioning session at sites across the District. Share your thoughts about this important process!



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## Tubman Village Charter blazes a union trail

Education unions are the most important stabilizing force in American public education. Our work has pushed every positive change that has happened in our schools—from desegregation to class size reduction. But for almost twenty years most education unions across the nation have neglected the struggles of a significant and growing portion of our education family: charter school employees.

Since their inception (with the passage of the California Charter Schools Act in 1992) the core of the charter schools movement has been the promise of a school based on real collaboration, academic freedom, and innovative programs. Moves by politicians and the business elite to co-opt this positive agenda are rooted in the same things that undermine our work in school districts: privatization, top-down decision-making, and the slow dismantling of public education.

Today many charter school employees recognize that union membership gives them the security and stability they need to restore the “promise” of charter schools. Charter schools across the state are forming new unions and bargaining contracts to protect themselves, their schools and their students. Just last year teachers at Tubman Village Charter School organized to win union representation by SDEA. Their struggles remind us of the real value of having a union: to give us a voice at work.



### Fair contract now! Tubman Village Charter School teachers are united in their effort to negotiate a fair contract.

Likewise, SDEA members are beginning to realize the value our sisters and brothers in charter schools add to the education community. Charters provide creative programs, community-based schools and a real voice for parents. In many instances charters now enjoy the kind of curricular freedom and community engagement SDEA members are working to build. We should be proud to represent educators at Tubman Charter School, and supportive of their struggle to bargain their first union contract.

Charter educators, like District educators, chose their dedication to children as a career. As SDEA, CTA and NEA move forward in building a positive future, working with charter educators can help us all to reclaim the solidarity, high standards, and the promise of teacher-led reform that have defined public education and our unions for generations.

## District explores illegal healthcare changes

In considering whether or not to engage with the District in their proposed Community School Model of reform, the single most important issue for SDEA members is **trust**. From Bersin’s Blueprint to last year’s proposed eight percent salary reduction, SDUSD has consistently engaged in behavior that makes it very hard to trust their stated good intentions. While SDEA leadership has been cautiously optimistic about the vision the School Board has begun articulating for the District, and the respected role teachers will play in that vision, it is hard for us to fully **trust** the District when we learn about shenanigans such as their recent legally dubious exploration into leaving VEBA mid-contract.

SDEA has a closed three-year contract with the District that secures our medical benefits through VEBA for the term of the contract. VEBA has long been valued by our members because it enables us to maintain high quality medical care at the lowest possible cost.

Despite VEBA’s track record of success, and despite the fact that SDUSD cannot unilaterally change the provider of our benefits, a few months ago the District decided to work with Keenan & Associates to study the possibility of terminating VEBA coverage as early as January of 2011 and

developing its own healthcare trust instead.

SDEA leadership is strongly opposed to a District-run healthcare because we would lose the purchasing power of VEBA and risk skyrocketing premium increases after any initial savings are realized. This is not a new concept, but one that many unions and school districts have tried and later realized was costly and ill-advised.

Moreover, SDEA is deeply concerned that the District has chosen to pursue this possible path with Keenan & Associates, which has been named in lawsuits in Santa Clara County and Northern California in which they were accused of “steering clients toward insurers that are offering brokers undisclosed commissions, funded through insurance premiums” (*The Recorder*, Sept. 22, 2005). In our view, health benefits are too valuable to trust to a third party like Keenan & Associates, and we fail to see why the District would be willing to take this type of risk.

SDEA is exploring all legal avenues regarding this violation of our trust and the law, and will respond aggressively. But we hope that those in SDUSD who believe in an SDEA-SDUSD partnership for real reform will put a definitive stop to these patterns of behavior. **If you want our trust—earn it.**



## November 2, 2010 General Election: Union Political Recommendations

### State of California

Governor – **Jerry Brown**<sup>3</sup>  
 Lieutenant Governor – **Gavin Newsom**<sup>3</sup>  
 Insurance Commissioner – **Dave Jones**<sup>3</sup>  
 Secretary of State – **Debra Bowen**<sup>3</sup>  
 Attorney General – **Kamala Harris**<sup>3</sup>  
 Treasurer – **Bill Lockyer**<sup>3</sup>  
 Controller – **John Chiang**<sup>3</sup>  
 Superintendent of Public Instruction – **Tom Torlakson**<sup>3</sup>  
 Assembly District 74 – **Crystal Crawford**<sup>2</sup>  
 Assembly District 76 – **Toni Atkins**<sup>3</sup>  
 Assembly District 77 – **Mark Hanson**<sup>2</sup>  
 Assembly District 78 – **Marty Block**<sup>3</sup>  
 Assembly District 79 – **Ben Hueso**<sup>3</sup>  
 Assembly District 80 – **Manuel Perez**<sup>3</sup>  
 Senate District 36 – **Paul Clay**<sup>3</sup>  
 Senate District 40 – **Juan Vargas**<sup>3</sup>

### Statewide Propositions

Prop 18 (State Water Bond) – **NO**<sup>2</sup>  
 Prop 19 (Decriminalize Marijuana) – **Neutral**<sup>3</sup>  
 Prop 20 (Congressional Redistricting Overhaul) – **NO**<sup>3</sup>  
 Prop 21 (Protect State Parks) – **YES**<sup>3</sup>  
 Prop 22 (League of Cities Budget Proposal) – **NO**<sup>1</sup>  
 Prop 23 (Suspend Air Pollution Laws) – **NO**<sup>3</sup>  
 Prop 24 (Repeal Costly Corporate Tax Loopholes) – **YES**<sup>3</sup>  
 Prop 25 (Simple Majority State Budget) – **YES**<sup>3</sup>  
 Prop 26 (New Budget Restrictions) – **NO**<sup>3</sup>  
 Prop 27 (Eliminate Redistricting Commission) – **YES**<sup>3</sup>

### Local Initiatives

Prop A (Ban on County Project Labor Agreements) – **NO**<sup>4</sup>  
 Prop B (San Diego City Attorney Protection) – **YES**<sup>4</sup>  
 Prop C (North SD Planning Amendment) – **Neutral**<sup>4</sup>  
 Prop D (Contract Public Safety and Services in City of SD) – **YES**<sup>4</sup>  
 Prop G (Carlsbad Permanent Pension Freeze) – **NO**<sup>4</sup>  
 Prop H (Chula Vista Utility User Tax Modernization) – **YES**<sup>4</sup>  
 Prop J (SDUSD Parcel Tax) – **YES**<sup>4,5</sup>  
 Prop K (San Marcos School Bond) – **Neutral**<sup>4</sup>  
 Prop L (Julian School Bond) – **Neutral**<sup>4</sup>  
 Prop M (Dehesa School Bond) – **Neutral**<sup>4</sup>  
 Prop O (South Bay Union Teacher Retention) – **YES**<sup>4</sup>  
 Prop P (Encinitas School Bond) – **Neutral**<sup>4</sup>

### U.S. Congress<sup>3</sup>

U.S. Senate – **Barbara Boxer**  
 U.S. House of Representatives District 50 – **Francine Busby**  
 U.S. House of Representatives District 51 – **Bob Filner**  
 U.S. House of Representatives District 53 – **Susan Davis**

### Local Candidates – San Diego County & Cities

County Assessor/Recorder/Clerk – **David Butler**<sup>4</sup>  
 County Treasurer-Tax Collector – **Dan McAllister**<sup>4</sup>  
 County Board of Supervisors District 4 – **Steven Whitburn**<sup>4</sup>

County Board of Supervisors District 5 – **Steve Gronke**<sup>4</sup>  
 Chula Vista City Council Seat 2 – **Pat Aguilar**<sup>4</sup>  
 El Cajon Mayor – **Mark Lewis**<sup>4</sup>  
 Escondido City Council – **Jason Everitt**<sup>4</sup>  
 Imperial Beach City Council – **Ed Spriggs**<sup>4</sup>  
 La Mesa City Council – **Patrick Dean**<sup>4</sup>  
 National City, Mayor – **Alejandra Sotelo-Solis**<sup>4</sup>  
 National City, City Council – **Mona Rios & Luis Natividad**<sup>4</sup>  
 Oceanside City Council – **Charles Lowery**<sup>4</sup>  
 San Diego City Council District 4 – **Tony Young**<sup>4</sup>  
 San Diego City Council District 6 – **Howard Wayne**<sup>4</sup>  
 Santee City Council – **John Ryan, John Minto & Janet Enright**<sup>4</sup>

### School Boards

SDUSD School Board – **Kevin Beiser**<sup>4,5</sup>  
 Alpine Union School – **Jim Archer**<sup>4</sup>  
 Calexico Unified – **Ruth Duarte & Tony Valenzuela**<sup>4</sup>  
 Central Union High School – **Sean Arviso**<sup>4</sup>  
 Chula Vista Elementary, Seat 3 – **Francisco Sevilla**<sup>4</sup>  
 Chula Vista Elementary, Seat 5 – **Nick Segura**<sup>4</sup>  
 National School – **Ted Godshalk & Elizabeth Vasquez**<sup>4</sup>  
 Poway Unified – **Kimberley Beatty**<sup>4</sup>  
 Sweetwater Union High School, Seat 1 – **Karen Janney**<sup>4</sup>  
 Sweetwater Union High School, Seat 3 – **Hector Rivera**<sup>4</sup>

### Community College Boards<sup>4</sup>

Grossmont/Cuyamaca, Seat 1 – **Edwin Hiel**  
 Grossmont/Cuyamaca, Seat 2 – **Debbie Justeson**  
 Grossmont/Cuyamaca, Seat 5 – **Greg Barr**  
 Imperial, Area 2 – **Peter Martinez**  
 Imperial, Area 5 – **Norma Sierra Galindo**  
 Imperial, Area 7 – **Steven Taylor**  
 Mira Costa, Area 7 – **William Fischer**  
 Palomar – **Paul McNamara**  
 Southwestern, Seat 4 – **Norma Hernandez**  
 Southwestern, Seat 5 – **Tim Nader**  
 San Diego, District A – **Maria Senour**  
 San Diego, District C – **Rich Grosch**  
 San Diego, District E – **Peter Zschiesche**

### Other Local Districts<sup>4</sup>

Alpine Fire Protection District – **Jim Archer**  
 Imperial Irrigation District, Division 1 – **Rudy Maldonado**  
 Lakeside Fire Protection District – **Peter Liebig, Susan Conniry & Milton Cyphert**  
 Otay Water District, Division 1 – **Chris Schilling**  
 South Bay Irrigation District, Division 1 – **Jose Cerda**  
 South Bay Irrigation District, Division 4 – **David Bensoussan**  
 Tri-City Healthcare Dist. – **Ira Landis, Cyril Kellett & Doreen Gounaris**

<sup>1</sup> Recommended by CTA

<sup>2</sup> Recommended by CA Labor Federation

<sup>3</sup> Recommended by CTA and CA Labor Federation

<sup>4</sup> Recommended by San Diego/Imperial Central Labor Council

<sup>5</sup> Recommended by SDEA



## Read this if you have PacifiCare!

### Open Enrollment Info

You've probably heard from your SDEA site representative about changes VEBA is making to our health plans, or been contacted directly by the District. If you have any questions about these changes or if you or your dependents are currently enrolled in any PacifiCare plan we **strongly recommend you attend one of the remaining meetings below.** Make sure you've received information on the plan changes before you enroll.

*General informational meetings:*

**Oct. 25 and 27, 5 - 7 p.m.**

**Eugene Brucker Ed. Center Auditorium**

*Open enrollment fairs (all fairs are from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.):*

**Oct. 21 — Transportation Department**

**Oct. 26 and 27 — Thurgood Marshall Middle School**

**Oct. 28 — Morse High School**

## What will you leave undone?

**At any moment**, you could need Disability and Life Insurance. That's why it's so important to make sure you have CTA-endorsed coverage from The Standard. After all, your family and your salary are two of your most important assets. **Visit MyCTA at [www.cta.org](http://www.cta.org) or call us at 800.522.0406 (TTY), 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Pacific Time, to find out how The Standard can help protect what's important to you.**



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