

PRESS RELEASE



San Diego Education Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

San Diego Unified School District Invited to Stand With Educators, Parents and Students to Protect Schools from a Broken Budget System

SDEA calls on Board members to fight County requirements that ask districts to “budget in the dark”

SAN DIEGO—As San Diego Unified School Board Members consider another round of unnecessary layoffs, parents, students and the San Diego Education Association are calling on the District to stand with educators to challenge a broken budget system rather than simply accept it.

“Our district is being asked to budget in the dark, without any accurate data,” said SDEA President Bill Freeman. “This destabilizes schools and causes months of unnecessary grief for students, parents and educators all to appease accountants at the County Board of Education.”

This practice of unnecessary layoffs has become a common occurrence due to the County Board of Education’s requirement of districts to approve budgets prior to acquiring accurate funding and attendance data. Just last year the district issued 1,350 layoff notices, only to recall more than 90 percent of them in order to fully staff schools in the fall.

This past fall the district threatened insolvency and the need to close schools primarily due to the potential for mid-year funding cuts from the state. Those cuts never materialized.

“The system is broken and our children are suffering from a lack of leadership willing to fight back,” said Freeman. “Time after time we’re told that the district’s finances are beyond repair, and every time we find that the situation was not nearly as bad as we were told. It’s time for the District leaders to lead.”

As in past years, SDEA has offered viable solutions which protect the classroom should any accurate budget data show an actual need for future cuts. A combination of already identified cuts, such as real estate and central office savings, can be used to minimize the classroom impact of any potential budget shortfall, further proving that threats of layoffs or deep cuts to employee pay and benefits are unwarranted.

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The San Diego Education Association is affiliated with the California Teachers Association, National Education Association, and the AFL-CIO.

February 8, 2012

Open Letter to the Parents, Educators, Students and Community of San Diego:

It is an unfortunate truth that California's school funding system is fundamentally broken. It is broken not only in that schools are underfunded, but it is broken in that school districts are required each year to budget in the dark. Districts are required to submit multi-year budgets to the County months and even years before anyone knows what funding levels are actually going to be. Crucial decisions about employee layoffs must be made in March for the upcoming school year, and yet the state budget is not finalized until June at the earliest. This timeline problem is made worse by the current leadership of the San Diego County Office Education, which chooses to require San Diego County districts to assume that the worst-case scenario will come to pass. Many California counties choose a more moderate approach.

Working within this broken system, each year since 2008 the San Diego Unified School District's budget process has become an annual roller coaster cycle of issuing hundreds or thousands of layoffs only to recall them months later. Just last year, the SDUSD School Board chose to lay off nearly 1,400 educators based on those fiscal unknowns—layoffs that yet again proved unnecessary. The truth is that the District's worst-case scenario budget projections have not once come to pass. Each year the layoffs are recalled, schools are opened fully staffed, and the District carries forward a positive multi-million dollar ending balance—*every single time*. This year is no different. Preliminary analysis of the District's own numbers shows that the District will remain fiscally stable without a single layoff, or slashing and burning educators' pay and benefits, even *if* the worst case occurs.

When the School Board chooses to lay off educators based on false worst-case scenario budget projections, they destabilize our schools, they hurt our students, and they put employees and our families through months of needless grief and anguish. **But the School Board has another choice.** Isn't it time our District quit blaming the County or the state and took responsibility for keeping our schools intact? The way you fix a broken system is not to passively function within it. The way you fix a broken system is to *challenge* it. Educators and parents are willing to put in the work to fight this broken budget system so we don't have to go through this year after year. But we can only do that if we're not having to fight the District itself to protect our schools from yet another round of threatened cuts that are not necessary.

And so today we are asking the San Diego Unified School Board, will you commit to immediately cease your support for layoffs and contract concessions, and instead to stand with parents, students, educators and all school employees in a shared fight against the broken system which underfunds our schools and forces the District to budget in the dark?

We are ready when you are.

In solidarity,



Bill Freeman, SDEA President

Request by San Diego Unified School District to Bargain Concessions as a Solution to the Current Budget Crisis

1/25/12

As you know, the District is anticipating a \$124 million shortfall, including an anticipated mid-year cut of approximately \$41 million if tax increases are not approved by the voters in November. This initial proposal to all units would ask for bargaining unit concessions that would yield, in total, a budget solution of \$91 million. The remaining \$33 million will be addressed by the District by other means.

The District requests that each of its bargaining units agree to bargain a concessions agreement, which must be completed before February 15, 2012. In exchange for the concessions outlined below, the District will offer each of its bargaining units a commitment not to pursue layoffs (other than staffing to enrollment, leave of absence replacement, or program changes) for the 2012/13 fiscal year. It is intended that these agreements will amend the current collective bargaining agreements which expire on 06/30/13.

Specifically, the District requests a one year agreement with each unit that includes a combination of the following:

Concessions	Total District Savings
Forego raises in current contract	\$21 m
Continue one week furlough for the 2012/13 year (or equivalent salary reduction)	\$17 m
Health benefit concessions (FOR EXAMPLE ONLY, benefits cap based on Kaiser family plan)	\$12 m
Sub-Total District Savings	\$50 million
Contingent Concessions Dependent on November Ballot Outcome	
FOR EXAMPLE ONLY, further salary reduction (potentially progressive based on income, commensurately applied based on actual cut) to be applied after Nov. 7, 2012 ONLY if the State of California imposes mid-year cuts.	\$41 million
Total District savings from concessions	\$91million
Total other savings	\$33 million
Total Budget Shortfall 2012/13	\$124 million



It is time to protect our schools again.

RALLY TO FIGHT THE CUTS!

One year ago, the SDUSD School Board voted to lay off 1,300+ educators—nearly 1 out of 6—in order to fill a budget hole that **never materialized**. After months of anguish and destabilization of our schools, and in response to immense community pressure, more than 90% of those layoffs were recalled. In fact, the District carried a **\$70 million surplus** into the current the school year. Every year since 2008, the District’s worst-case scenario spring budget projections have been off by tens of millions of dollars. But rather than learn from their mistakes, the Board is yet again threatening **thousands** of layoffs to fill a projected budget “deficit” when **everybody knows** that the legislature won’t pass the final state budget for another five months, and all indicators point to **school funding finally improving**. The Board is hiding behind the County’s worst-case scenario budgetary guidelines to justify their behavior. **But the School Board members absolutely have a choice!**

Just like last year, these layoffs will **hurt our neediest students the most**. No matter who is laid off, losing **1 out of every 6** (or more!) educators means:

- o **Even fewer** teachers in classrooms—classrooms that become so overcrowded that learning is impossible.
- o **Not enough** counselors providing support to struggling students.
- o **Inadequate** health services for children who otherwise have none.
- o **Not enough** adult supervision to make sure that all of our students are safe all of the time.

We elected this Board to stand up for our children, **especially** when standing up is hard. But if the Board won’t do it, then **we are going to be the ones who stand up**. And if we fight together, **WE CAN WIN**.

The fight against every single layoff IS...

- ...the fight to keep our class sizes low.
- ...the fight to keep nursing and counseling.
- ...the fight to keep our schools safe.
- ...the fight for a broad, rich curriculum.
- ...the fight to protect our public schools!**

RALLY AT THE SCHOOL BOARD!

WHEN: 4 p.m. on Tuesday, March 6

WHERE: 4100 Normal St.

How do we know layoffs and other cuts are unnecessary again?

The District claims their budget deficit for 2012-2013 will be \$124 million. Setting aside the fact that this “hole” is based on worst-case scenario budget projections that historically never come to pass, the District could absolutely weather that worst-case scenario **WITHOUT** a single layoff or prematurely slashing employee pay and benefits. \$41 million of the “hole” will only come to pass **IF** the governor’s ballot measure fails to pass and **IF** there are mid-year cuts next January—cuts the District can bring to the bargaining table **IF** they happen (which they did not this year), leaving a projected \$83 million deficit that can be handled as follows:

	\$83
• Already Board-identified savings/revenues.	—\$33
	\$50
• Already Board-identified Central Office cuts.	—\$3
	\$47
• Yet again the District is not accounting for natural attrition (est. 300).	—\$23
	\$24
• The District is budgeting for \$9 million <i>extra</i> reserves.	—\$9
	\$15
• CA just restored \$4 million in transportation funding.	—\$4
	\$11

The remaining \$11 million equates to only 150 layoffs, which could instead be absorbed by cuts to extra layers of middle management or non-personnel items.