

# THE ADVOCATE

SAN DIEGO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION



## DRACONIAN BALLOT INITIATIVES ON THE HORIZON

One Seeks to Send Public School Money to Private Schools  
While Another Seeks to Get Rid of Our Union Contract Protections

A question that a lot of members often ask is, “Why are we involved in politics?” The 2022 elections will put that question into a stark contrast as our union, and working people across the state, face down two massively destructive ballot initiatives that are funded by incredibly wealthy and out of touch people. These initiatives, if they are successful, will significantly change the lives of our members. They will also gut the institution of public education in our state.

### REQUIRING STATE FUNDING OF RELIGIOUS AND OTHER PRIVATE SCHOOL EDUCATION

[One initiative seeks to bankrupt public schools by taking public school money and giving it to private schools.](#) This voucher initiative will undermine our public schools by taking the resources that we currently use to staff our schools and allowing it to be given to any other school including those that may be religious in nature.

Voucher supporters prefer these alternative terms because they know that the very word “voucher” costs them public support. So, they are careful to use terms with marketing appeal such as “opportunity scholarships” and “parental choice.” Voucher proponents like to use the word “choice” because they know it has great appeal, but when using

a voucher, a parent’s choice begins—and ends—with choosing the schools to which their children will apply. Private schools are not required to participate in voucher programs, and those that do participate may limit their enrollment. Some voucher programs even allow schools to maintain exclusive admissions policies and discriminate on the basis of religion, gender, English proficiency, and special needs. Most private schools do not provide programs for students with special needs.

### ELIMINATING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING FOR TEACHERS, NURSES AND OTHER PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

[The other destructive initiative](#) that will be gathering signatures to be placed on the ballot in 2022 seeks to eliminate our right to negotiate over basic bread and butter issues like our wages, health benefits, class/caseload size. The signature gathering effort is likely to be successful as this initiative is supported by an incredibly wealthy venture capitalist billionaire based in Silicon Valley.

Tim Draper, the eccentric billionaire who is behind this effort, has previously sponsored other failed initiatives that sought to institute a school voucher program in 2000 and another initiative that sought to break up the State of

California into six smaller states. While this may be a fun side project for this out-of-touch billionaire, if he is successful it stands to severely negatively impact our lives as working people.

### WE CAN WIN!

These two initiatives will pose an existential threat for our union and the rights of its constituent members. The path to victory will only be through our members. The people who are supporting these initiatives are out of touch, and that gives us a great opportunity because our schools are based in the communities we serve. While they’re out of touch, educators are intimately connected to all of the communities in our city and state. That connection gives us something they cannot buy with all of their billions.

The effort to win will require our membership using our grassroots community connections and being active in the push to defeat these initiatives. This isn’t something that can be done by a handful of member leaders, it will require the mobilization of thousands of members talking to parents and families in your school communities. The members on the SDEA Political Involvement Committee will be working on a program to conduct outreach to school sites. Stay tuned as we gear up for this major fight in 2022!



SDEA PRESIDENT



KISHA BORDEN

# LETTERS IN SOLIDARITY

SDEA VICE PRESIDENT



KYLE WEINBERG

## WE MUST DEFEND PUBLIC EDUCATION FROM PRIVATIZER BALLOT INITIATIVES

For the past two years, we have seen unprecedented Federal and State funding for public education. SDEA has been strategic in our bargaining to ensure that the increased funding is being utilized by the District to fund necessary supports for students and school communities. But, our work is not finished. We know that without pressure on Sacramento and Washington D.C. lawmakers, this funding will expire in two to three years. In real terms, that means lost programs, widening inequities, increased class size and layoffs. To make matters worse, Propositions 30 and 55 are due to expire at the end of the decade. Without a replacement or renewal, this too will result in a decline in school funding.

Beyond the expiration of State and Federal funding, we are facing other attacks on public education. David Welch, the Silicon Valley entrepreneur who underwrote *Vergara v. California* that attempted to do away with tenure and seniority rights, is among those proposing the [Constitutional Right to a High Quality Public Education Act](#). Welch and the other initiative proponents argue that a high-quality public education should not require increased funding for public education. In plain terms, it only allows parents and education reformers to attack educational laws, policies and regulations, but explicitly prohibits them from seeking funding to improve their schools.

And if that wasn't enough of a fight, advocates of school choice have proposed two voucher initiatives that are awaiting the approval of the attorney general to start gathering signatures. These initiatives would provide students with educational savings accounts in the amount of \$13,000-\$14,000 per year to attend the

private school of their choice. These initiatives would divert those funds from current state funding for public schools.

And finally, there is another attack on public sector unions. Tim Draper, a venture capitalist and long-time voucher advocate, has filed an initiative to ban collective bargaining for all California public employees. Text from the initiative filed a few months ago includes "Sec. 1.5(a) No public employee shall have the right to form, join, or participate in the activities of a public employee labor organization for the purpose of representing said employees on matters of employer-employee relations."

With the challenges parents and families faced over the last year, some or all of these initiatives may be appealing to a greater number of voters. We as union educators must be prepared for a huge fight for the schools our students deserve. As we've always done in the past, together we will fight against any ballot initiatives that seek to limit our rights to fair representation or that seek to defund public education.

We must also listen to students, parents and community allies and lift up their voices and aspirations. Our organizing will be more powerful when we leverage the strength of our membership in partnership with other education justice advocates to fend off the attacks from privatizers and expand support for public education.

**TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER!!**

**KISHA BORDEN**  
SDEA PRESIDENT

**KYLE WEINBERG**  
SDEA VICE PRESIDENT



# SDEA MEMBER LEADERS WIN CHANGES —TO IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW GRADING POLICY—

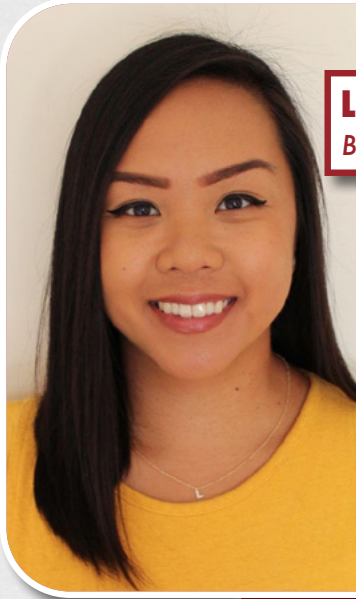
In October 2020, the SDUSD board [updated the grading policy](#), which required that teachers accept late assignments from students and allowed students to resubmit assignments.

A lot of teachers already had policies allowing late work and resubmission of assignments. But with the new policy, teachers worried the particulars of the policies were no longer up to them and could be dictated by the school board or a principal.

Could the work be submitted the day before grades are due, causing a last-minute deluge of grading for the teacher? How many times could the assignments be resubmitted? How many times would a teacher have to grade and regrade the same assignment?

SDEA member leaders from secondary schools Laurie Bailon-Yagyagan from Bell Middle, Julia Knoff from Scripps Ranch High, Juan Sebastian Ulloa from Hoover High and SDEA staff met with the District about the grading policy changes and workload implications. We shared our concerns about the lack of clarity in the new grading policy on how decisions are made that are within educator purview such as deadlines for submission of late work and limits on the number of opportunities for reassessment and revision.

After filing a unionwide grievance and [reaching a settlement](#) with the District, teachers won relief from the workload implications of SDUSD's new grading policy including enshrining educator rights to shape practices at the site and individual classroom levels that are appropriate for their student populations and subject areas.



**Laurie Bailon-Yagyagan**  
Bell Middle School



**Julia Knoff**  
Scripps Ranch High School



**Juan Sebastian Ulloa**  
Hoover High School

**UNDER THE AGREEMENT,  
EACH TEACHER HAS THE RIGHT TO DETERMINE:**

- 1 THE LENGTH OF THE GRACE PERIOD FOR EACH ASSIGNMENT**
- 2 WHICH ASSIGNMENTS MAY BE SUBMITTED WITHIN THE GRACE PERIOD FOR LATE WORK**
- 3 HOW MANY TIMES AN ASSIGNMENT CAN BE RESUBMITTED**

**THAT MEANS THAT EACH TEACHER CAN CREATE POLICIES THAT WORK FOR THEM AND THEIR WORKLOAD.**

## WHAT IS ON THE HORIZON?

The District continues to [gradually implement the new grading policy](#) including transitioning to standards-based grading at the secondary level. While standards-based grading is familiar to elementary school educators, the shift at the secondary level will require continued engagement between SDEA member leaders and the District to ensure that the new policy is being rolled out in a manner that centers educator voice and professional discretion.





**ALBA**



**Baker Elementary**



**Birney Elementary**



**Dailard Elementary**

# UNION STRONG

in New SDEA Member T-Shirts



**EB Scripps Elementary**



**Green Elementary**



**Oak Park Elementary**



**Roosevelt Middle**





## TK4 UNION MEMBERS MADE

# 'Good Trouble'

## AND IT PAID OFF!

In November, SDEA members won a legally-binding agreement that secures teaching jobs for Preschool Teachers and quality education for their students – and they did it by making good trouble!

### UNION MEMBERS DEMANDED TO BARGAIN IMPACTS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION OVERHAUL

At the start of the pandemic, SDUSD leaders decided to overhaul Early Childhood Education. In March 2020, just a few days before schools closed, SDUSD announced their plan to close some 75% of preschool classrooms and create new, multi-age transitional kindergarten classrooms. These new classrooms (which SDUSD variously refers to as 4TK, TK4, and Universal TK) commingle preschool students who are as young as 3 years old with TK students who are as old as 5.

Because SDUSD educators are union, when SDUSD announced the new TK4 program, teachers demanded our right to bargain over the impacts the new program would have on teachers and students.

### TOP BARGAINING PRIORITY: A GUARANTEE OF BOTH A TK AND PRESCHOOL TEACHER

When TK4 bargaining began way back in August 2020, there were a lot of issues on the table. One key issue was staffing. SDUSD launched TK4 classrooms with a TK Teacher, as required by law, and a Preschool Teacher, who was not required by law. Because the law didn't require both a TK and Preschool Teacher, SDUSD could pull the trigger at any time and lay off some 70 Preschool Teachers, mostly women of color, and more than 1,500 TK4 students would lose a teacher.

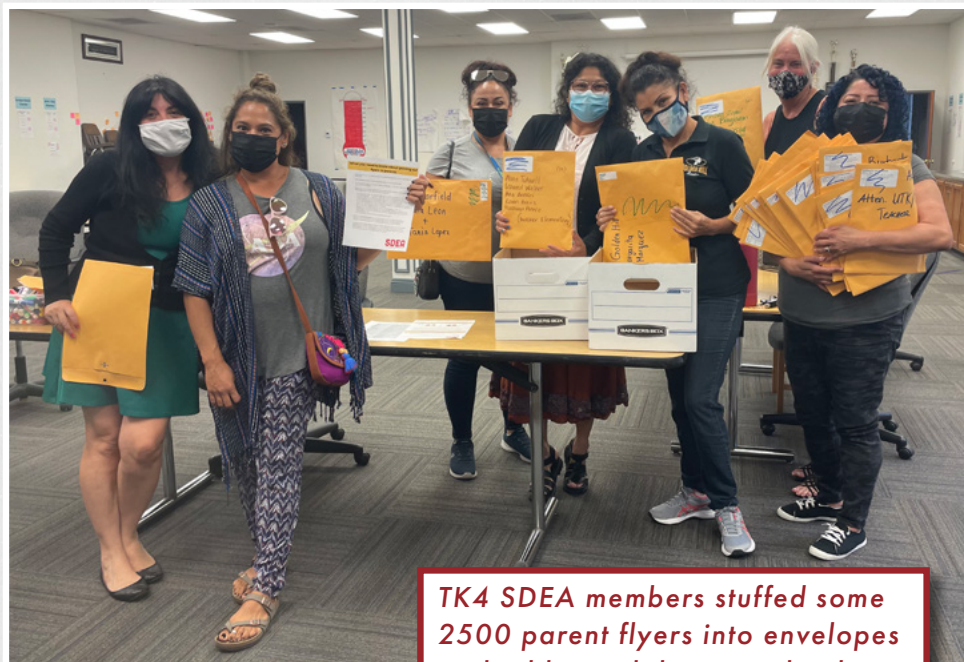
Since the law didn't require both teachers in the classroom, a top priority was bargaining a legally-binding agreement that did. In fact, in an SDEA survey, 90% of 4TK teachers said it's essential to have both a Preschool and TK

Teacher because it improves student learning. Each teacher, because of their educational and experience background, brings different expertise to the 4TK classroom. And with two teachers, the youngest learners -- just 3-5 years old -- get more individualized attention.

### DISTRICT LEADERS TALKING OUT OF BOTH SIDES OF THEIR MOUTH

Bargaining dragged on for more than a year and in fall 2021 a bargaining impasse was officially declared. At the bargaining table, top district leaders were still saying no to any guarantee of having both teachers in TK4 classrooms. But they were talking out of both sides of their mouth because, meanwhile, in the news media and at statewide conferences with education bigwigs, they were promoting what they called "the co-teaching model" of having both a TK and Preschool Teacher. In fact, on October 1, 2021 district leaders even took

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



TK4 SDEA members stuffed some 2500 parent flyers into envelopes and addressed them to schools.



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## TK4 UNION MEMBERS MADE GOOD TROUBLE

a group of California assemblymembers on a tour of TK4 classrooms specifically to showcase the effectiveness of TK and Preschool Teacher co-teaching!

### TK4 TEACHERS SWUNG INTO ACTION, ONE MONTH TO WIN

So that is when TK4 teachers swung into action. At a union meeting on October 4, union members made a plan to pressure decision-makers. We wanted to change the minds of decision-makers in just one month, by the next bargaining session on November 4, so the plan had to be ambitious, and we needed all hands on deck. At the union meeting, we used a Google Form that listed all of the work we thought we had to do to win, and everyone signed up for something.

The first thing we did was make a parent flyer. It explained to parents how teachers were fighting to guarantee that their TK4 students would have two teachers, and asked parents to call the superintendent and school board. One group of teachers stepped up to translate the flyer into Spanish, and another group stepped up to stuff printed flyers into envelopes and addressed them to TK4 teachers.

### TEACHERS MOVED PARENTS TO ACTION, WHICH GOT THE ATTENTION OF TOP DISTRICT LEADERS

That first union meeting was on a Monday, and by Friday, TK4 teachers started passing flyers out to their parents. We know that the parents' phone calls started rolling in to the superintendent and school board because district leaders started reacting. One top district leader even emailed principals at TK4 schools to try to enlist them in an effort to calm our efforts!

After a week of parents' calls, conditions were right to call for a sit-down with Interim Superintendent Lamont Jackson and school board President Richard Barrera. The union member delegation that met with

them was made up of TK4 co-teaching pairs, both the TK and Preschool Teacher. The spirit of solidarity was strong as TK Teachers told Jackson and Barrera that Preschool Teachers are essential to the TK4 classroom. The delegation said that Jackson and Barrera needed to end the bargaining impasse by guaranteeing a future with both teachers in the classroom.

### GETTING LEGISLATORS ON OUR SIDE

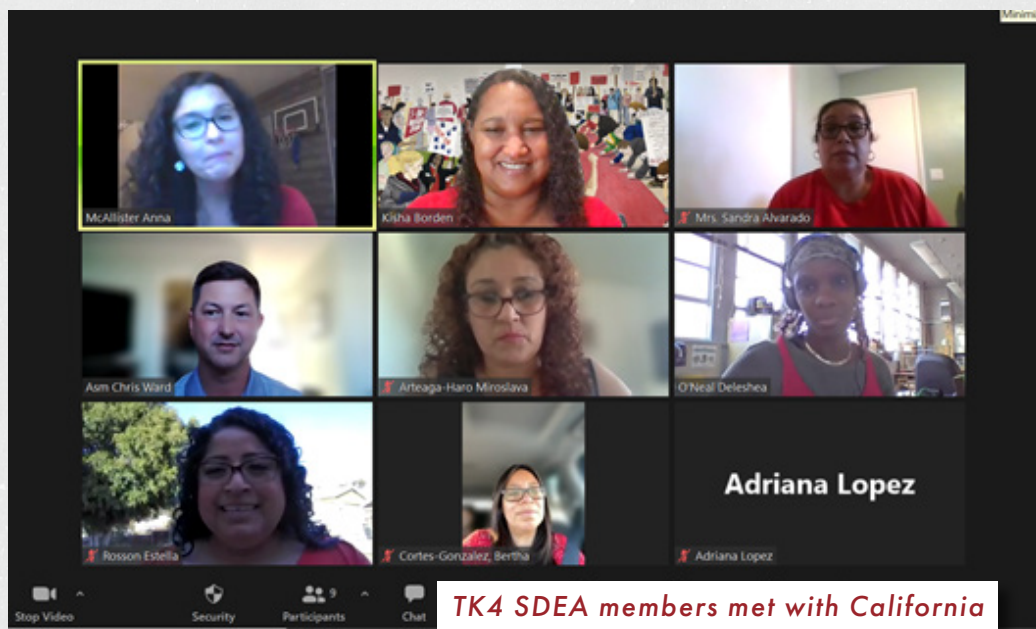
Teachers didn't stop with the superintendent and board president. Our next stop was to reach out to the very California assemblymembers who toured TK4 classrooms with top district leaders earlier in the month. TK and Preschool Teachers met with local Assemblymember Chris Ward and legislative staff of Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez. They were really surprised to hear that the same district leaders who told them about how good it was to have both a TK and Preschool Teacher in the classroom wouldn't bargain a guarantee for a future with both teachers. We asked them to support us by telling Superintendent Jackson and school board President Barrera to bargain an agreement that guaranteed both teachers. [Assembly member Gonzalez even wrote a letter](#) to them saying that she stands with teachers.

### ONE MONTH LATER, UNION MEMBERS' TROUBLEMAKING PAID OFF

After parent flyers, parents' phone calls, delegation meetings with the superintendent, school board, and assemblymembers, union members went back to the bargaining table on November 4th. After more than a year of bargaining, that was also the day union members walked away with a signed agreement guaranteeing that TK4 classrooms will have both a TK Teacher and Preschool Teacher for at least the next three years, at which point a new provision of law goes into effect, likely leading to another reorganization of TK.

The real lesson here is that it was pretty easy for top district leaders to keep telling us "no" – they did it for more than a year! – until we got organized. By organizing, we made it so uncomfortable for them to keep saying "no" that they would rather say "yes." We won not by making the best arguments (although we certainly did that!), but by coming together as a group to put pressure on the decision-makers to say yes to what was right.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



**TK4 SDEA members met with California Assembly member Chris Ward to ask him to support teachers in bargaining.**



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

## TK4 UNION MEMBERS MADE GOOD TROUBLE

### BRAVA TO THESE UNION MEMBERS WHO KNOW HOW TO GET THINGS DONE!

#### SPANISH TRANSLATION FOR PARENTS

Lorena Castro Madero, Perkins El.  
Lydia Cristina Murguia, Field El.

#### STUFFED PARENT FLYERS INTO ENVELOPES

Margarita Marquez, Golden Hill K-8  
Alma Tidwell, Walker El.  
Lidia Leon, Garfield El.  
Leticia Longobardi, Rodriguez El.  
Estella Rosson, Rosa Parks El.  
Georgeanne Gedney, Linda Vista El.

#### DELEGATION MEETINGS WITH DISTRICT LEADERS AND ASSEMBLY MEMBERS

Deleshea O'Neal and Georgeanne Gedney,  
TK4 co-teachers, Linda Vista El.  
Staci Urqizo and Marialisa Reyes, TK4 co-  
teachers, Euclid El.

Sandra Alvarado & Ann McAllister, TK4 co-  
teachers, Balboa El.

Estella Rosson & Bertha Cortes-Gonzalez,  
TK4 co-teachers, Rosa Parks El.

Lydia Cristina Murguia, Field El.

Miroslava Arteaga Haro, Paradise Hills El.

Kisha Borden, SDEA President

#### SDEA TK4 BARGAINING TEAM

Lydia Cristina Murguia, TK4 Preschool  
Teacher, Field El.

Miroslava Arteaga Haro, Preschool  
Teacher, Paradise Hills El.

Josephine Condra, Preschool Teacher

Colleen Andrews, Retired Preschool  
Teacher, Visiting Teacher

*...And every single TK4 Teacher who  
talked to a parent and put a flyer in their  
hand! YOU DID THIS!*

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*WE ARE*  
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