

# THE ADVOCATE

## SPED Victory Lays Ground for Strong Bargain *This spring we fight for safer schools and fair pay*

After a yearlong fight to increase Special Education staffing, SDEA members won a major victory at the bargaining table. SDEA won an agreement on a hard cap of 20 for all current Education Specialist: Mild/Moderate teachers and Resource Specialists. This hard cap will be in effect in the fall of 2020, with caseload reductions to begin immediately in the fall of 2019. If this agreement is ratified, we will have one of the best caseload caps and the strongest Special Education contract language in the state of California. Other highlights include:

- The District will hire 26

more Education Specialist: Mild/Moderate teachers.

- A cap on new initial or PPPSS assessments for Education Specialists who are at full caseload, with additional staffing support, release time or hourly pay after the fourth initial/PPPSS assessment.
- Education Specialist: Mild/Moderate teachers shall be assigned to no more than three schools.
- A stipend of \$1,500 to any Resource Specialist or Education Specialist with a caseload overage during the 2018-19 school year.

These new rights will greatly improve special educators' working lives, and more importantly, our students' learning conditions.

Now much work remains to be done as SDEA continues reopener bargaining with the District on Wages and Safety for the remainder of this school year. Bargaining dates are scheduled throughout the spring, with the goal of settling our entire reopener bargain and ratifying our reopener agreement before the end of the year.

SDEA's bargaining team made strong proposals on Wages and Safety earlier this month.

The SDEA members on the bargaining team are fighting for a raise, plus the following safety improvements:

- More supports regarding students with severe or violent behavioral issues.
- Gate keys for all members.
- Adequate communication devices and intercoms.
- Active shooter and Pro-ACT training.
- Timeline for addressing maintenance concerns.
- Shared decision-making for Prop. YY facility improvement funds.

See your site Association Representative to get involved!

## Thrive Charter is Why We Need a Moratorium Now

School districts across California are beginning to call for a moratorium on charter schools and for good reason. Twenty years into the experiment of the 1992 Charter Schools Act we've seen too many examples of what happens when accountability and regulation are stripped away, and market-based competition is left in its place. In San Diego there is no better example of why we need immediate changes to the law, and a moratorium on new charters, than Thrive charter school.

Thrive first came to San

Diego Unified and then the SDCOE in 2014 and was denied by both the district and the county. The concerns raised back in 2014 all came to pass because the 1992 Charter Act allows local control to be ignored and schools to open even when there is no need for them and despite their failure to present a sound educational plan.

Since 2014, Thrive grew rapidly and despite massive student attrition of almost 40% per year due to its poor academic program, Thrive expanded to four campuses including a

brand-new facility that was built with millions of dollars in tax credits. Thrive didn't grow because it offered a safe and successful learning environment. It grew because it's CEO and the California Charter Schools Association (CCSA) employed an aggressive marketing campaign that framed our local public schools (and other locals charters) as being substandard and Thrive as being the best thing since sliced bread. This growth strategy came at a cost and it was Thrive's students that have paid the price.

Thrive's middle school provides a clear snapshot of just how bad things were. 80 percent of all of Thrive's middle school students failed to meet the state achievement standards in math, and 90 percent of low-income students failed the same standard.

In order to prevent another Thrive from opening and to address the adverse impacts that our schools and communities are facing we need real reform to the 1992 Charter Schools Act and we should start with a statewide moratorium on all new charter schools.



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# Letters in Solidarity

Kisha Borden  
SDEA President



Scott Mullin  
SDEA Vice President

## SDEA is building union muscle

In recent weeks, SDEA members have realized a significant victory around special education caseloads. By 2020, there will be a hard caseload cap of 20 for Education Specialist Mild/Moderate case managers. Members have also received a grievance settlement that includes a \$1,500 stipend and the agreement that the District will hire at least 26 additional Special Education positions next year to avoid the understaffing issue experienced this year and in years past. Additional details about our Special Education bargaining victory can be found on page one.

What we want to highlight here is that our bargaining team didn't achieve this contract language solely due to their hard work and expertise. Our team was able to make these ground-breaking gains because hundreds of members came together and made a clear demand: *Stop understaffing special education in our schools.*

Union members spent time filing over twenty site-level caseload overage grievances. Members talked to parents about caseload overages and the impact on student services. Hundreds of members signed petitions, participated in actions at the District office, and attended forums to voice our

concerns directly to District leadership. At those forums, members spoke powerfully, passionately and collectively about the need to increase special education staffing. We collaborated with parents to create an even stronger voice. Every action put increasing pressure on our District leaders to do the right thing. We never wavered from our core message: *Increase special education staffing.* Through these actions, we strengthened our union muscle, and our collective strength worked!

There is still work to be done in Special Education and other areas of our contract. This month, the bargaining team returns to the table for reopener bargaining around Wages and Safety. We will continue to exercise our union muscle to attain a fair wage increase and see vital safety improvements at our school sites. This fall, we will open the entire contract in successor bargaining. Exercise isn't always pleasant, but we know it results in a healthier, stronger body. We must continue to exercise our SDEA muscle to keep it strong.

Kisha Borden  
SDEA President

Scott Mullin  
SDEA Vice President

## Honor for trail-blazing past President

Hugh Boyle was president of the then San Diego Teachers Association in the late '70s. Under his leadership, we negotiated our first contract soon after state laws allowed for collective bargaining. Our union went on strike in 1977. This was uncharted territory under California's new collective bargaining law. Despite a court order that put an injunction on the strike, Boyle continued to lead the strike work. He was convicted of contempt of court, with 40 days in jail and a fine equal to about 70% of a teacher's

salary. Our union fought this decision all the way to the California Supreme Court, which eventually invalidated the conviction. With this win, our union established protections for educators' rights around strikes that we still enjoy today.

Throughout his career Boyle has taken personal risk for what he believed in, and he believed in educators. For that reason, SDEA has established the Hugh P. Boyle Lifetime Service Award, with Hugh Boyle as the very first recipient.

### SDEA Budget Hearings

SDEA will be conducting budget hearings from 4-5 p.m. on Monday, April 22 and Tuesday, April 23 at the SDEA office (10393 San Diego Mission Road, Suite 100). These hearings are an opportunity for members to give input on the SDEA budget before it is initially presented to the Rep. Council in May and adopted in June.

Valued at \$7,500

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