

SBUT ANNOUNCER

South Bay United
Teachers

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REFLECTIONS

Just a few years ago, many school campuses in the South Bay and throughout California were old and dilapidated. Classrooms, libraries, and fields were eyesores—some even posed dangers to students and employees. Our communities saw the need for better facilities and acted. Voters passed bond measures, some several. These bonds have funded the revitalization of old schools and in many cases have provided state-of-the-art, world class places for students to learn. While some schools are still in the process of being renovated, districts have committed themselves to making beautiful science labs, swimming pools, performing arts centers and spectacular athletic fields and rightly so. Every student deserves a great learning environment.

Before the makeovers were completed, however, the layoffs started. Every single one of our SBUT districts and the surrounding areas have opted for layoffs. The very employees charged with delivering the education opportunities in and on these spectacular facilities have been let go. Fantastic buildings are being built, but there are fewer educators left to teach, counsel and nurture in them. Of course we know that bond dollars used for buildings can't be spent on salaries, but another phenomenon has surfaced—the wholesale targeting of teachers, coaches and counselors. Districts are opting to use already scarce resources that **can** and should be

used to maintain employees vital to the educational environment to instead launch investigations, and in the worst cases dismissals against teachers based on hearsay and sour grapes.

Supply and demand, no doubt, has a great deal to do with why human resources officials feel confident in their attempts to try and remove experienced teachers and hire new ones in their place. There are so many exceptional educators out there as a result of layoffs that it's not hard to find a replacement—or so they think. Maybe it's a means some district officials have for bypassing laws related to layoffs and seniority. It appears that our most senior, most educated and yes, most expensive members are most often in the crosshairs.

So at the end of the year, what lesson can we take away from this reality and why bring it up now? Over the summer you will plan activities for the coming year. Consider focusing more time on your own family, on your own interests and things that make you happy. Consider taking your duty-free lunch and as much as you love tutoring or just opening your classroom or office up for students to study in, take that time to renew and decompress. Meet with your colleagues and of course attend your Union's meetings, but consider scaling back how much time you freely give (and how much you open yourself up for

complaints that could lead to discipline) and what else you could do with that time.

You are asked to do more and more with less yet you continue to do an amazing job with your students. Continue to do that during your duty hours, but consider scaling back your afterhours work and look for ways to beautify your own home and spend time with your own family and friends. We all need a "time out" and not just over the summer, but take the time—schedule it now for when school starts back. Your district is planning ways to scale back your salaries and/or benefits and looking at ways to spend less on you. Consider spending less time donating your services there.

As you leave your classrooms and offices this year, I hope it's with a feeling of pride and importance about the work you do. You've made a tremendous difference in the lives of young people and I think that in ten years or so your students won't extol the virtues of the iPad they had in school or the amazing locker rooms they had, but they'll remember the teacher or coach and something they were taught to do. They'll remember you.

Have a wonderful summer.

*Sandra Goins
Executive Director
South Bay United Teachers*

2012 WHO AWARDS

"We Honor Ours" in the SBUT chapters



When the Centinela Valley Secondary Teachers Association needed an elections chair in 2009, Erica Harbison volunteered even though she was new to union leadership. She quickly demonstrated that she was a dedicated leader who was willing to put in many hours of volunteer time to assemble an efficient and highly regulated elections system that is fair and systematic. Erica attended CTA election training and worked with then CTA Elections Chair, Leslie Littman to learn how union elections are run. Erica is also an active member of the CVSTA Representative Council and an important resource to all members at Lawndale High School where she works as an English teacher and department head.



Erica Harbison, CVSTA

A few years back, when Rod Mansfield was unhappy about the way the District was running its sports programs, he came to the union to ask for help, and when asked if he was willing to get involved he emphatically said, "Yes!" He quickly became one of CVSTA's most active leaders, and soon learned how to write up and file grievances. When our former grievance chair passed away in 2008, Rod stepped in and filled the void. During the past year he has spent hours contacting officials in Sacramento to compel our district to



Rod Mansfield, CVSTA

comply with state regulations and to back away from their plans to downsize our physical education department. He discovered who was in charge of enforcing California Ed code relating to PE, and is now on a first name basis with these officials.

Because of his seniority rank, Daniel Swearingen, counselor at Hawthorne High, has been laid off three times and worked at three different schools in Centinela Valley over the past four years. Last year he decided that he had had enough and that he wanted to be on the front lines to fight back.



Daniel Swearingen, CVSTA

When asked if he wanted to help with bargaining, he willingly agreed to attend training at CTA Summer Institute. He quickly became a key member of the team. He has an uncanny ability to be persistent and firm in his positions yet friendly and likable at the same time. When our treasurer suddenly left the District, Daniel ran for the position and won. He is a valuable addition to our executive board. He inspires confidence in our members and is often the calm and reasonable voice who brings other members together in difficult moments.

Sandra Rumble has been contributing to the Manhattan Beach Unified Teachers Association for many years as our secretary. She has been a stable force within our union. She is actively recruiting new

members along with organizing her site for the trials ahead. She makes all of our jobs easier with her accurate notes and makes sure we are on task during our meetings. MBUTA is grateful for Sandra's involvement and advocacy.



Sandra Rumble, MBUTA

Anne Keller has been an inspiration not only to her students but to her fellow teachers as well. The love Anne has for teaching English and helping students develop their voice in writing is second to none.



Anne Keller, PVFA

When the Palos Verdes Faculty Association Bargaining Team began a search for a new secretary, Anne came to mind immediately. The passion she has for teaching and her love for the profession made her a great match. Since Anne has joined the team she has done more than just take copious notes; she has offered her insight on district policies that have an effect on all teachers. Anne is never shy about voicing her opinion on contract language or policy change. The bargaining team has come to rely on Anne's skills and personality to maneuver through these most difficult economic times for California education.

Abby Maeder has served Palos Verdes Faculty Association as a building Rep and as well as Vice President. She regularly contributes helpful information to the

Bargaining Team, addresses the school board on our behalf and encourages membership among her colleagues. Abby communicates regularly with members and contributes great organizing ideas. She is a great leader, teacher advocate and, as a mother of seven, increases our District's ADA! PVFA is grateful to Abby for balancing motherhood with unionism!



Abby Maeder, PVFA

Anita Stoddard has been the diligent force behind making sure that our largest member group, the high school teachers, receive timely and accurate information from Redondo Beach Teachers Association leader-

ship. The high school teachers have a huge challenge in terms of meeting to do union business and Anita has made sure that they are up-to-date with what is going on in bargaining, health and welfare, conference opportunities, political actions, etc. by calling 10 minute meetings on a regular basis. She makes herself available to talk and meet with any teachers or administrators about any problem at any time. As a member of the RBTA Executive Board for four years, she has been our sounding board for high school issues and concerns that range from how administration treats teachers to working concerns



Anita Stoddard, RBTA

during remodel and reconstruction to AP to IB to A through G. Give it an acronym and Anita will make sure our folks are apprised, informed, and ready to act. Anita has been active in all political actions for a number of years. She helped with the Measure C Bond which has rebuilt all of our schools, she has fearlessly marched and carried signs in Pershing Square, in front of the high school and in front of the School Board. Anita is a role model to other union members and she wears her dedication to her profession and the union with pride.

Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it.

Marian Wright Edelman
American lawyer and social activist

Bidding Adieu... ... Welcoming the New

We say good-bye to SBUT Administrative Assistant Mary Sullivan at the end of the school year as she is retiring after 17 years with SBUT. Her skills and experience will be sorely missed.

We welcome wonderful new Administrative Clerk Melissa ("Lissa") Newton, who comes to us with much administrative experience and a sparkling personality. You can reach Lissa by email at sbutoffice@aol.com. Continue to contact Elise Tubbs using sbut@aol.com.

WE WANT TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOU!

If you have not already done so, or if you have recently changed email addresses, be sure to give the office your non-district email address—there will be very important news over the summer that will impact you. Email us at sbut@aol.com or sbutoffice@aol.com.

The November election will be extremely important for educational issues. Are you registered to vote?

If you need a registration form, call the office. (310) 921-2500

**Summer Office Hours for SBUT:
Monday—Thursday
10:00am - 2:30pm**

Letter to the Editor of the South Bay Daily Breeze In response to 5/6/12 article regarding teacher discipline:

While I am very glad you are focusing on school safety, it is unfortunate that the Daily Breeze and its news group has chosen to run a story on alleged teacher misconduct the week we celebrate the Day of the Teacher.

By your own reporting, there are over 3700 teachers in the South Bay and you report there are 23 cases of alleged misconduct that have been reported to the teaching commission. Instead of using this week to spotlight the stellar job that teachers in the South Bay do under enormously challenging circumstances (less funding, fewer days to teach, high stakes testing, etc.) your paper has opted to broaden the cloud of suspicion gathering over Los Angeles and spread it throughout southern California.

Like doctors, teachers are expected to be at their best every day--every child deserves the very best teacher every single day. That's why it is so very important to maintain programs that provide for teacher support in challenging times. The Redondo Beach, Palos Verdes, Centinela Valley and Manhattan Beach school districts have all chosen to sweep funds that the State provides for teacher support—Peer Assistance and Review and use those funds for other educational purposes. One South Bay district goes a step further and uses those funds to hire private investigators and attorneys who pit employee against employee in “interviews” that impinge upon contractual rights and those afforded under the Rodda Act. Clearly, according to District administration, now all teachers are guilty—period. They are not worthy to be thanked, not responsible for any victories (neither in the classroom nor on the court or field) and if a parent or student says it happened—that's taken as gospel. They act first and the teacher is left trying to salvage a career. When they find they were wrong, there's no apology, no article in the paper and no, you can't un-ring that bell.

When teachers have to busy themselves with trying to ward-off false allegations, it leaves little time for questioning administration for bad policies and practices. (For instance, paying a superintendent nearly \$300,000 per year and giving him a \$20,000 bonus this year while demanding furlough days from teachers. Or telling the community to “save our teachers” while reducing the school year and hoarding millions in “reserve”).

While it is understandable that Districts are having to make tough choices about their budgets, eliminating teacher support programs while labeling teachers as incompetent and unfit sets Districts up for a downward spiral of educator quality. Who will be attracted to this profession when you are viewed with suspicion more often than with respect?

As it is, teachers spend most of their waking hours teaching, preparing to teach, assessing student work, and communicating with parents about that work often at the expense of quality time with their own families. Now add layers of ever-growing testing requirements; implementation of programs foisted upon them by the trend of the moment and now having to defend their profession and justify their pensions and too-small salaries all while maintaining their optimism and a nurturing environment for their students. What kind of climate are we creating for the ninety-nine plus percent of teachers who go above and beyond the call of duty every day? What impact might that ultimately have on students?

As you examine school safety in the South Bay, I hope to see stories on the number of threats made against teachers, actual assaults against teachers and how the District handles (or doesn't handle) such assaults. How does the District deal with intruders on campus? I hope you will examine districts' school safety plans and how they have handled and plan to handle emergencies. Ask administrators in the South Bay if all teachers have keys to locked gates or are they and your children trapped inside in the event of a critical incident. Ask if your campus is safe from strangers wandering in at will if there are no gates. Ask how many accidents have happened in the last five years---with all the school bond construction going on, how well have schools maintained a safe environment for students to learn and workers to work? Ask if all parent and community volunteers are fingerprinted and are background checks done on them before they are allowed to work on campus. How many volunteers have been banned from working on campus because they have been found to have criminal records? How many registered sex offenders live in the area adjacent to the schools? While it is very important to look at all aspects of campus safety, there are truly greater vulnerabilities in these areas.

*Sandra Goins
Executive Director
South Bay United Teachers*