

sdta HOTLINE

September 1, 2015

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Message from the President

Election season is upon us. It is sometimes hard to drag ourselves away from the overwhelming tasks of our day-to-day teaching life to get involved in the political side of our world, but it is important to keep in mind how much of an effect local and state politics can have on our working conditions. As you will see on the back of this Hotline, this year there is a Board of Trustees election and we have an opportunity to elect members of that board who support teachers and believe that our voices should be heard when setting the course for the district. The Board does more than evaluate the superintendent and ratify our contract agreements. They decide whether or not to pursue district-wide curricular shifts, determine the goals and priorities for the district, and have the final say on the building plans for our current physical expansions. They decide if support classes and programs are effective enough to continue and whether or not the district should establish a universal "homework policy". These are decisions that you must carry out (or at the very least "live with") in the classroom and your voice should be heard in the process. Please consider committing to at least one election activity in the coming months to help us elect our endorsed candidates.

-Edith Salvatore

SDTA ENDORSEMENTS FOR SUHSD BOARD OF TRUSTEES

It is SDTA's pleasure to announce that we are endorsing incumbent Trustee **Carrie Du Bois** and challenger **Georgia Jack** in this November's school board election. The election is scheduled for November 3rd, but this year San Mateo County will be piloting an all mail-in ballot system, so our target is really October 5th when the ballots are mailed out to voters.

SDTA is excited to endorse **Carrie Du Bois**, whom we supported in her initial run for the board four years ago. She has been a strong supporter of teacher voice, oft reminding the Board in public session that those of us working in the schools and with students are the "experts" and that our input should be considered as the Board makes important decisions about the direction the District takes. A Carlmont parent and strong supporter of Redwood High School as well, Carrie has been visible around the district and always has an open ear for teacher concerns. Carrie has made it her

mission to see that the students who face the most challenges are always considered and has been a voice against the constant push for academic success at all costs and for consideration of students' and teachers' mental and emotional well-being.

Georgia Jack first ran for the Board, with SDTA's endorsement, in 2013 and barely missed unseating popular incumbents. She is a parent of a current and former Woodside Wildcat and is a member of the Woodside Site Council. She has worked within the district in a number of parent and volunteer capacities and has attended many school board meetings. She is well-versed in the issues that face our district, its students, and the members of SDTA and she is open to dialogue on these issues. Georgia is enthusiastic and committed and we look forward to working with her on the campaign and on the Board.

SDTA's Political Action Committee met on August 20th to interview three candidates for the Sequoia Union High School District's Board of Trustees and forwarded their recommendations to the Legislative Council for approval last Tuesday.

Of the five registered candidates, three sought our union's endorsement. Laura Martinez, who was appointed to the Board in March of this year when long-time Trustee Olivia Martinez resigned her position, interviewed, but the PAC felt that she was not familiar enough with the district nor the issues facing SDTA and its members to merit endorsement. Board President Allen Weiner did not respond to our invitation, as he did not when he ran four years ago, and while he did not tell us why he chose not to respond, a lack of interest in teachers' support makes us circumspect about his perception of the Board's relationship with the union and its members. The fifth candidate did not release contact information through the registrar's office.

EVALUATION GUIDELINES

Over the past few years, SDTA has been working with the District to make the evaluation process a meaningful professional development opportunity for our members. In order for that to happen, we must participate in the process as equals in the conversation.

Last week, all certificated employees received an email with a link to the evaluation overview.

(<https://sites.google.com/a/seq.org/sushd-evals/home>) Under our contract, **you must be alerted that you are scheduled to be evaluated and by whom by September 14** of this year. All probationary employees and most temporary employees are evaluated every year. Permanent employees are evaluated every other year, unless there are special circumstances that have necessitated an “off-year” evaluation (there can be many reasons for this).

If you are uncomfortable with your assigned evaluator for any reason, **you have the right under Article VIII, Section 1.4 to request a change in evaluator.** If this is your choice, you should email your principal and/or evaluator, simply stating that you wish to exercise your contractual right to request a different evaluator. This does not give you the right to select who that replacement will be, only to request that it not be the evaluator assigned to you. **You must make this request BEFORE your pre-evaluation conference.** The only exception to this right is if you have been referred to participate in the PAR program.

The contract also allows for the administration to choose to “skip” some permanent employees. This is entirely at the discretion of the site administration and cannot be requested by the member.

Once you have been notified you will be evaluated, you must then have a pre-evaluation conference with your evaluator. At this conference, the two of you select the three standards which will be evaluated for the year. **Under Section 2.2 of the contract, the selection of the standards should be a collaborative process.** This means you should go into that meeting prepared to make a case for the standards you want to work on this

year. If mutual agreement is not possible, then the evaluator may select the two of the standards. Your evaluator should not be automatically selecting two standards for you.

The pre-evaluation conference also establishes what assessment methods will be used to evaluate attainment of the standards. **Section 4.1 of the contract establishes that the evaluator and member will “attempt to mutually agree on assessment methods,”** but that should agreement not be met, the evaluator has the final decision on the methods. This is another strong reason why it is important to prepare before the pre-evaluation conference and have a rationale for why certain assessment methods are valid and others may not be in showing your mastery of the key elements in each standard.

If you are a permanent employee who has received at least two satisfactory evaluations as a permanent employee, you may be eligible for self-assessment, though all employees must be evaluated via formal conference at least one time every six years. Those who elect self-assessment should alert their assigned evaluator of that decision as soon as possible, before the pre-evaluation conference. The principal has the right to deny this request and that denial can be appealed to the Assistant Superintendent of HR.

The moral of the story is simple – the more you plan ahead and take control of your evaluation, the more valuable it will be for you and the more useful you will find the feedback from your evaluator. Treat this process like you would any other facet of your teaching and take the time necessary to review the materials and make a plan for success.

SDTA SITE VISITS

SDTA President Edith Salvatore will be making visits to your sites and talk to members. We also hope to have information about opportunities for you to become involved in the campaign. Please mark the following dates on your calendars and plan to attend. Look for an email from your site reps for the location of the meetings.

Thursday, 9/3 – Redwood High School

Tuesday, 9/8 – Sequoia High School

Tuesday, 9/15 – Carmont High School

Thursday, 9/17 – Woodside High School

Tuesday, 9/22 – Menlo-Atherton High School

Thursday, 9/29 – Foothill-Alto Academy

Join our Facebook Group for Updates

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/MySDTA>

Your SDTA Site Reps:

Carlmont

Katya Burton
Connie Dominguez
Cary Milia*
Hai Nguyen
Genevieve Tep
Carolyn Wade*
Kelly Redmon
(communications)

Menlo-Atherton

Tim Bowler*
Manuel Delgado
Karina Escobar-Weaver
Tania Kranzler*
Patrick Maier
Mike Molieri
Liane Strub

Sequoia

Belén Álvarez-Iglesias
Debolina Dutta
Guadalupe Navarrete
Octavio Rodriguez
Edith Salvatore*
Jasmine Schimek
Dylan Shelley*
Kate Sheehan

Woodside

Adele Alvarez
Rick DeFrancesco
Greg Gruszynski*
Diana House
Alexandrina Pretto
Marian Welch
Felicia Yang
*bargaining team rep

Redwood

Javier Galaviz*
Mike Martin
Maureen Svenson

District Office
(available opening)

EPAA
Tamesha Wise

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