

THE DEFENDER

San Marcos Educators Association Newsletter



<https://www.sanmarcosteachers.org/>



Message From the President

Hello Colleagues,

As I start my 4th year as president, I want to say how truly honored I am to be your president. I was so touched by your cheers at the welcome back breakfast, and I want to reiterate my firm belief that we are a strong union and that we are ready for a busy year. While we are continuing our bargaining for the 2024-2025 contract, we are also in the midst of an important election for our school board and endorsed bond measure JJ. On this note, if you are a San Marcos resident, please vote this November for the SMEA endorsed SMUSD School Board candidates. SMEA has officially endorsed the following incumbents:

Carlos Ulloa for Trustee Area A
Sarah Ahmad for Trustee Area B
Jaime Chamberlin for Trustee Area D

And please VOTE YES on Measure JJ! This new school bond will provide much needed repairs and construction for our schools. Be on the lookout for information about upcoming precinct walks, sign waving and other opportunities to support our candidates and the bond.

To help improve communications, SMEA will provide updates after our school board meetings to showcase our featured members and give you our perspective on the meetings. Let's stay focused on having a great year, getting a fair contract, and winning at the ballot box for our school board and bond!

Yours in Solidarity,
Dale

A Message
From The
President

A
Celebration
of
Greatness

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HIGHLIGHTS**

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In honor of Marla Rosenthal's Retirement, members of the SMEA Executive Board wanted to share some messages of Congratulations to this amazing Educator, Union Member, and Friend!

Celebrating the Legacy of Marla Rosenthal:
A Lifetime of Teaching, Learning, and Inspiring

After 28 years of dedication, passion, and unwavering commitment to education, Marla Rosenthal is retiring from San Marcos Unified School District. As I bid farewell to my friend and colleague, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on her incredible impact she has had on multiple students, colleagues, San Marcos Educators Association, and the community at large.

Teaching

From the very first day Marla walked into her classroom, she not only brought a wealth of knowledge but a genuine love for teaching. Marla was the type of teacher that students sought out for her wisdom and steadfast support. Whether it was staying after school to provide extra help, cheering on students at events, or simply offering a kind word of encouragement. Marla was much more than just academic excellence and teaching; she was a source of comfort and pride for students to learn from and be inspired by.

Colleague

Marla's influence extended far beyond the classroom. As a colleague, she was a constant source of wisdom, collaboration, and encouragement. Whether it was offering new teachers' advice or contributing innovative ideas to improve the school community, Marla was always ready to lend a helping hand. Marla was my go-to technology source for everything from my classroom to Association work, to personal devices.... she was my rock and my very first phone call. Just recently, she talked me through my frustration of missing files and taught me how to recover items that I permanently deleted. Her calm demeanor and wisdom were never lost on me throughout the process.

San Marcos Educators Association

Marla has been an invaluable member of the Executive Board of SMEA for over twenty years. She was the first person I met when I began my journey working for the association. As the only two board members with elementary experience, Marla and I were placed on multiple committees and task forces together. Soon, we found ourselves on the SMEA bargaining team which meant spending even more time together. I soon began to realize just what an incredible educator and person Marla truly was. As much as she enjoyed being a teacher, she was equally passionate about creating a strong union that emphasized public education. Marla was instrumental in helping write contract language, fighting for teacher's rights, and creating an environment where teachers could be successful. A lot of what SMEA is today, is a result of the endless hours of dedication from Marla Rosenthal.

Community

Marla had the opportunity to bring one of her true passions to SMUSD, the ability for students to have an on-campus STEAM lab available to them. Marla was able to not only pitch the idea, but create, design, and implement this new program at her school and many other sites. Her STEAM program provided a dynamic learning environment where students can explore interdisciplinary concepts, engage in hands-on projects, and collaborate with peers. She was creating future ready students before that phrase ever existed in SMUSD.

Looking Forward

As Marla steps into this chapter of her life, I wish her nothing but joy, relaxation, and new adventures. Though her presence will be deeply missed, her legacy will continue in the lessons, memories, and inspiration she leaves behind. Thank you, Marla, for your years of service, dedication, and passion. Your impact on this district and the lives you have touched will never be forgotten. Congratulations!!!

Damon Gidner

When I first became President of SMEA, I quickly learned that Marla Rosenthal was the go to for all the ins and outs of our union. I celebrate and honor her career at SMUSD. She is an amazing teacher, executive board member and union member. We are not SMEA without all of the contributions that Marla Rosenthal has had over her illustrious career. I celebrate her retirement and congratulate her on an amazing career. Marla you are truly my rock! With utmost love and sincerity,

Dale Pluciennik

Thank you, Marla, for your many years of service to the San Marcos Community, especially for being an awesome teacher and SMEA leader for so many years. Your former students are so lucky to have had you under their wing, and I have appreciated learning from you while working together in the SMEA Executive Board.

Robert Gordon

Thanks, Marla for being an amazing mentor and friend to me as I learned the whys and wherefores of union business! We have a strong union and an amazing district because of your indefatigable spirit and willingness to do whatever it took to get the job done! You are a true force of nature, and we will miss you! Congratulations on an amazing career my friend!

Elliott Powell





Welcome To the Executive Board

Digital Media Chair-Hayley Haubner

Hello SMEA,

I am honored to be a part of your SMEA Executive Board as the new Digital Media Chair! I have some big shoes to fill, and I hope to give this position the same creativity and thoughtfulness that Marla put in. This is my 8th year as an elementary teacher in San Marcos, but I was a student in the district from 1998-2011! I currently teach 5th Grade at Richland Elementary, and I have also taught kindergarten at San Marcos Elementary and 4th Grade at Joli Ann Leichtag Elementary. I am grateful for this opportunity to serve the wonderful teachers of SMUSD!

Community Engagement Committee

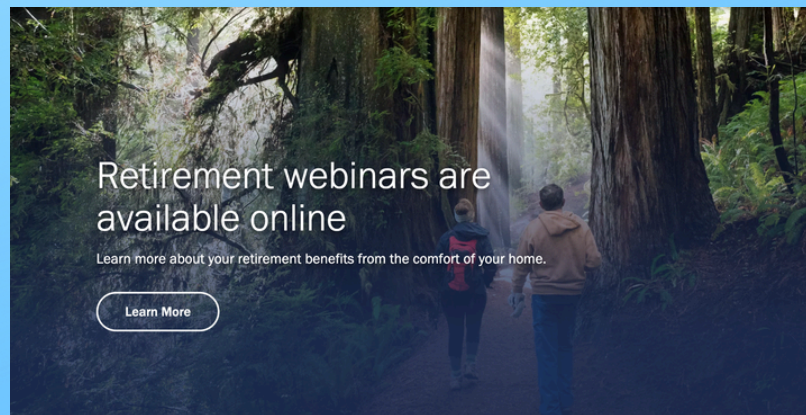
SMEA's Community Engagement Committee is a collaboration between SMEA, community stakeholders, and SMUSD educators. Our goal is to foster understanding between the community and our union, brainstorm ideas to better our school community, and provide insight to the community about what our union does for our students. We all know that our working conditions are our student's learning conditions, but at times this is lost on the community at large. The district is often the first to communicate with families and a lot can get lost in their messaging. The Community Engagement Committee helps our stakeholders, consisting of parents, guardians, and family members, to understand firsthand what SMEA and its educators are all about.

Thank you Chris Coughlin for Co-chairing this committee with me last year. We are currently looking for a co-chair for this upcoming school year. If you or someone you know might be interested in joining the committee, please email smea2ndelemrep@gmail.com

Resources



CALSTRS Retirement Webinars



CalSTRS offers webinars designed for all stages of your career. Communicating virtually is now more important than ever. Register today so you can plan ahead by better understanding your CalSTRS benefits. These are live webinars, and you will have an opportunity to ask questions.

You must use a current browser to register for a webinar.

After you register for a webinar, a registration confirmation email will be sent to you. If you do not receive an email, check your spam folder.

OK GO MUSIC Inspired STEAM Lessons K-12

Mental Health Awareness

Here are some very useful links pertaining to mental health awareness. Check out all of [VEBA's new online mental and behavioral health resources](#).