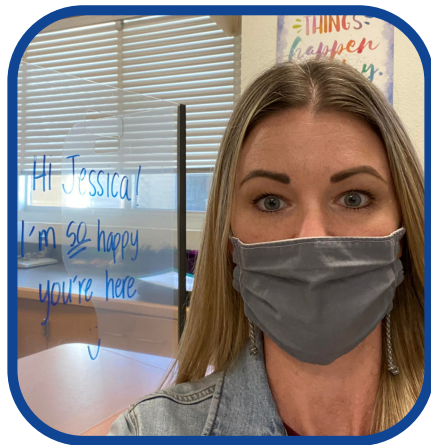
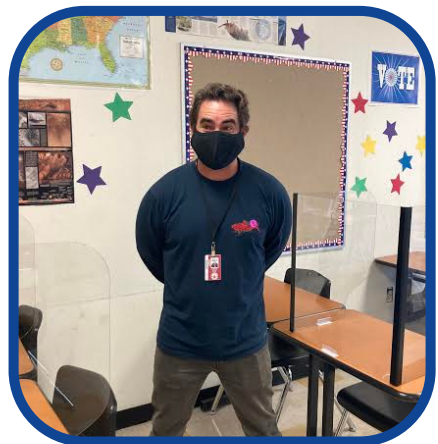


SMEA

SAN MARCOS
EDUCATORS' ASSOCIATION



THE DEFENDER



High School teachers prepare their classrooms ahead of students' return to campus. Top row, from left: Juliana Bustos and Barbara Tollison (SMHS). Middle row, from left: Marci Davis (SMHS), Nicole Miller (MHHS), Anthony Stone (MHHS). Bottom row, from left: Amy Kivett, Alecia Markgraf, and Meghan McKinney (MHHS).

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SMEA COMMUNITY

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE



Mission Hills High School Counselor, Cherryl Baker, was recently awarded Counselor of the Year by the San Diego County Office of Education. We are so excited to see a #UnionStrong educator taking home this award! Congratulations, Cherryl, for well-deserved recognition of your passion and hard work.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF DESI HERRERA



On December 28, 2020, SMUSD Teacher Desi Herrera passed away after a long battle with cancer. Desi had been a teacher in the district for over 15 years, as well as a coach. He is survived by his wife Freda, who is also a teacher in SMUSD, and their three sons, all of whom are current students in SMUSD. The SMEA Executive Board voted to donate money on behalf of all SMEA members to a scholarship fund to support Desi's children and their academic goals. Please join us in extending our deepest sympathies to the Herrera family.

SMEA Scholarship for Graduating Seniors



The SMEA scholarship is available to SMUSD graduates planning to continue their education. Application criteria:

- Graduating senior from SMUSD schools
- One letter of recommendation
- Unofficial transcript in order to verify GPA.

Scholarships will be based on financial need, academics, community service, extracurricular activities, and letter of recommendation.

Children of SMEA Members are encouraged to apply!

Application deadline is May 1, and more information can be found on the [SMEA Website](#)

AN INVITATION: KNOW BETTER, DO BETTER

Learning is a lifelong endeavor; a continuous process that requires reflection, honesty, and the ability to critically view the process through the lenses of others' experiences. Our country had a reckoning with racial inequity in May of 2020 with the horrific death of George Floyd at the hands of members of the Minneapolis, Minnesota police force. For some citizens, this news story was an awakening to the racial injustice that is woven throughout the history of the United States, a country built upon land already inhabited by Indigenous people; but for millions of Black Americans, this was just one of countless incidents in their lived experiences reflecting the need for systemic change in this country.

Systemic change cannot happen overnight and while it may seem daunting, teachers are on the frontline in this fight to create inclusive environments for our students that share the stories and history of all Americans. Our curriculum, culture, and history have been shared through the lens of whiteness. That must change, but how? Recently, Dr. Ibram X. Kendi, author of numerous bestselling books, including, [How to be an Antiracist](#), asserted, "The heartbeat of racism is denial." As educators, it is our obligation to be reflective of our own practices and understand that our classroom is a microcosm of the world at large. Denying that race-related issues impact our students and our instructional practices cause further harm to those we have been called to serve.

I imagine you may still be asking yourself, "Where do I start?" Why not join us? San Marcos Educators' Association has created a vibrant community of educators within our Racial Equity Affairs Committee (REAC). Since late September, REAC has been



Maya Angelou

"Now that I know better, I do better"

meeting every other Wednesday to discuss ways in which we can cultivate and create meaningful change within our SMUSD community. As educators, we understand the importance of community in the process of learning. Systemic change takes hold in the grassroots actions of a community. In order to foster activism in our students, we must plant the seeds of empathy, action, and truth in the lessons we teach. Joining is easy. It requires a simple email. No fees. No expectations to come to each and every meeting; just a willingness to grow as an educator and a human. Please email Sam Alderton (samantha.alderton@smusd.org) to be added to the Zoom invitation list.

Our REAC community frequently references a quote from American poet and civil rights activist, Maya Angelou, "I did then what I knew how to do. Now that I know better, I do better." We would love to hear your voice, learn from you, and help us all in our journey in doing better. ■

Article by Andrea Berning, La Costa Meadows Kindergarten Teacher, SMEA Site Rep, and REAC Member.

OPINION: Don't third-party THE union... make OUR UNION stronger



When was the last time you heard someone ask, “What does the union do for me?”

Pretty recently, I would bet and, if you're like me, it's not a question that makes you feel good about being a union supporter. If that question rubs you the wrong way, there's a good reason for it. Think about what that question assumes:

1. The role of a union is to do things for members.
2. Members judge their union based on what it does for them as individuals.
3. Most importantly! THE union is an outside organization. It isn't the employer, but isn't the workers either. It's a third party in the employment relationship.

This is called “third-partying the union” and it's something that employers love to do. Especially when workers are trying to form a new union, employers will talk about how THE union will make it impossible for workers and employers to speak to each other directly; how THE union just wants to take dues money from workers but can't really help them; and how THE union is really just made up of a bunch of self-interested fat

cats who want to support their lavish lifestyles. Sound familiar?

Here's the rub. When we let union members talk about THE union, we're going along with how employers see unions. We're letting union members “third party” their own unions!

And what gets ignored? How about the fact that unions are democratic organizations where being a member means having a voice? How about the fact that unions are the only

organizations that give workers equality with the employer in negotiation and enforcement of terms and conditions of employment? How about the fact that unions are often helping organizations that put on food drives and build wheelchair ramps? There are so many ways in which unions are supporting the quality of working people's lives in some obvious, and some more subtle ways, but you'd never know it when you start hearing people talking about THE union.

So how do we get out of the trap of “third partying” THE union?

Well, first of all, let's talk about replacing the article with a pronoun. It's not THE union — it's OUR UNION. This simple shift in language shrinks the distance between the people and the organization. The members are their unions and we should use language that reflects that.

Second, let's think about analogies. One of the worst analogies for a union is the insurance company. What image does that conjure up? It's a for-profit business that's taking people's

(Continued on next page)

("Third Partying", Continued from previous page)

money, whether there's a problem or not, and might or might not be there to help if something goes wrong. Who trusts an insurance company? In the relationship between you and your doctor, who gets to decide whether the care that you and your doctor both believe you need is going to get paid for? The insurance company! When you get in to an auto accident, who gets to decide whether you will come through it OK, or end up in bankruptcy without a car? The insurance company!

Why would we want our unions to be thought about in this way? Union contracts are not insurance policies and union dues are not insurance premiums. If you let people think this way, why shouldn't they ask you, "What has THE union done for me lately?" (That's a question I'd like to ask about every insurance company!)

Then what happens when you ask them to step up and be active in support of their union? I bet a reply you would recognize goes, "Isn't that what I pay my dues for, so someone else will do this for me?" And why shouldn't they ask that if they are looking at union representatives and staff as insurance agents? That's no way to build a strong, worker-led, democratic organization.

Here's an alternative analogy for you — the gym membership. You can pay your gym membership month-in and month-out, but if you don't work out, it's not going to do a damn thing for you.

We need active union members who are building powerful collective bodies and minds. We need workers who claim their unions as positive and influential organizations in their lives and their communities — and commit to fixing them when they don't work the way they should.

We don't need THE union — THAT corrupt, ineffectual, politically motivated, out-of-touch organization that just takes our money. We need OUR UNIONS — healthy, strong, and ready to win! ■

Article by Sarah Laslett, former Director of the Washington State Labor Education & Research Center at South Seattle College. Article reprinted with permission.

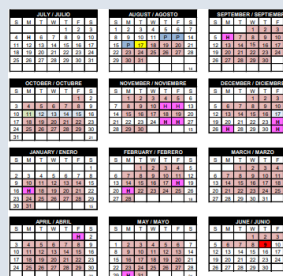
SMUSD Happenings & Important Dates

Reminder! Transfer Requests are due to HR no later than April 1.

Spring Holidays: Our District is home to a rich array of cultural and religious traditions. Keep the following dates in mind as they are likely celebrated by and significant to some of your students. Consider researching any of the holidays you may be unfamiliar with:

- March 27: Beginning of Passover
- March 28: Palm Sunday
- March 29: Holi
- April 2: Good Friday
- April 4: Easter
- April 13: Beginning of Ramadan
- May 2: Orthodox Easter
- May 12: Eid al-Fitr

District Calendars:



SMUSD School Year Calendars are now available through 22/23 school year on the [SMEA Website](#)

Highlights include:

- August 12, 2021 start date
- June 9, 2022 end date
- Four-day Veterans' Weekend
- Four-day Presidents' Weekend

Reopening Health and Safety: What the MOU Covers

SMEA and the District worked closely on creating a successful reopening plan. SMEA bargained language that prioritized safety and the well being of students and teachers. It was our goal to make sure everyone felt safe and comfortable returning to campus, so that the focus could then shift to teaching and instruction. With that in mind, here are a few highlights of the safety portion of the MOU.



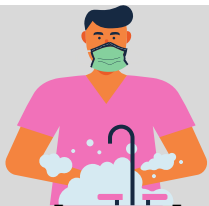
Classrooms

- Plexiglass dividers for student desks
- Six feet of space between all occupied desks
- Room capacity numbers posted throughout campus
- Number of students per classroom limited to 18
- HVAC filters changed on a regular basis
- Daily cleaning of high-touch areas in classrooms and around campus
- Weekly decontamination “fogging” in every classroom when students are on campus



Masks

- Masks are to be worn by everyone on campus unless a medical reason is submitted
- Unit members who are in close contact with individuals may request a District-provided N95 mask



Handwashing

- Hand sanitizer will be provided by the District
- Multiple options for handwashing with stations placed throughout campuses



If Someone Tests Positive

- Following a closure due to a COVID-19 exposure, closed classroom spaces shall be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected prior to being reopened for in-person learning
- If an individual tests positive, the HVAC filter will be replaced for the classroom(s)

Miscellaneous

- All required PPE shall be provided by the District
- All meetings will be held virtually while the county is in the red or purple tier