

Vote “No” to betrayal of San Francisco teachers’ strike! No more sacrificing livelihoods and social rights while billionaires feast!

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San Francisco educators should reject with contempt the betrayal of their four-day strike and vote “No” on the austerity contract accepted on Thursday by the United Educators of San Francisco (UESF) and brokered by American Federation of Teachers (AFT) President Randi Weingarten.

Educators should repudiate this deal and follow the powerful example of New York-Presbyterian nurses, who overwhelmingly rejected a sellout agreement on Wednesday.

The strike of the city’s 6,400 educators was greeted with massive community support. It must be expanded, not wound up. The issues—above all, the need for livable wages, healthcare and more support for special education—are not isolated to San Francisco. Los Angeles educators, 35,000-strong, voted by 94 percent to strike two weeks ago, with strike action also authorized in San Diego and two Sacramento districts.

Statewide, teachers are looking for a fight but have been hamstrung by the California Teachers Association (CTA) bureaucracy and its phony “We Can’t Wait” public relations campaign, which has sabotaged a unified struggle.

Now is the time to go on the offensive. Educators are in a position to link their struggle with the ongoing strike of Kaiser Permanente nurses and technical staff, New York City nurses and vast sections of the American working class entering into struggle, including refinery workers, autoworkers, logistics workers and more.

To properly evaluate the tentative agreement (TA), educators must demand that the full TA and all associated “memorandums of understanding” be posted online. Educators must be given adequate time to study it and discuss its terms at mass membership meetings. There must be no return to work without a vote.

However, it is already clear that the agreement is a slap in the face. Teachers are being offered an insulting 2 percent wage increase in each of the next two years (with additional *paid work days* to bring the deal up to 5 percent), and 8.5 percent for support workers over two years.

Supposedly, in exchange for maintaining low wages and giving up sabbaticals, educators will get relief on 2026 copays and full coverage for some family healthcare plans by January 1, 2027. However, given the elimination of hundreds of positions year after year, the district will likely “cover” any healthcare costs by cutting jobs.

The agreement fails to address another critical demand of educators: the need for support for special education (SPED). Since 2011, SPED has been under attack, with repeated rounds of paraeducator layoffs, chronic underfunding and rising numbers of students requiring services.

The claim that there is no money to provide livable wages and quality public education to everyone is a lie. In what universe should hard-working educators barely subsist in a district that is home to some 100 billionaires?

The strike has pit teachers in San Francisco directly against the Democratic Party, which runs both local and state governments.

Colluding from the beginning against the walkout were former Speaker of the House and centimillionaire Nancy Pelosi; San Francisco’s Democratic Mayor Daniel Lurie, part of the billionaire Levi Strauss family, who played an unusual and direct role in the talks by demanding fiscal austerity; and AFT President and longtime Democratic National Committee member Randi Weingarten, who flew into town to oversee negotiations. Weingarten herself is also part of the millionaires club, bringing home about \$500,000 annually.

These figures have been backed by the Democratic Party machine, including California State Senator Scott Wiener and California Governor and presidential hopeful Gavin Newsom, all of whom have cited San Francisco’s \$114 million deficit and the “need” for cuts.

The high-level intervention against the strike exposes the ruling oligarchy’s fear at the eruption of a rebellion by teachers and the broader working class.

The San Francisco Unified School District’s “funding crisis”

is entirely manufactured. While the ruling oligarchy enriched itself by another \$1.5 trillion last year, and 905 billionaires in the United States now hold a combined \$7.8 trillion, every social program is under attack and workers face steadily declining living standards.

San Francisco, like nearly every public school district in the US, has endured decades of underfunding at both the state and federal levels. Both political parties have colluded with the ruling elite to corporatize and privatize education while systematically cutting funds to public schools—from Bush’s “No Child Left Behind,” to Obama’s “Race to the Top,” to the Biden-Harris administration’s removal of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds.

The assault on public education is now being vastly escalated with Trump’s dismantling of the Department of Education, the creation of national vouchers and cuts of hundreds of millions of dollars from critical programs.

Meanwhile, rising fixed costs plague schools struggling to maintain buildings, provide busing and lunches and pay staff. Enrollment numbers are down nationally, largely in tandem with the explosive growth in the cost of raising children and the devastating impact of ICE raids in immigrant communities.

These pressures, however, are profoundly exacerbated under conditions of San Francisco’s extreme social inequality, home to about 100 billionaires. Thirty-one percent of students attend private schools, significantly reducing the district’s per capita state funding. Moreover, the state education funding formula is based on the “California cost of living,” not indexed to San Francisco’s much higher local inflation in housing, healthcare and labor. Finally, there are disproportionate enrollment losses due to substantial “out-migration”—families who simply can no longer afford to live in the district.

The role of the Democrats and Governor Newsom, in particular, has been to keep San Francisco schools under state control and impose brutal austerity. Educators, parents and students in the district have been protesting threatened school closures and “portfolio” downsizing since 2021, with marches and rallies in targeted neighborhoods.

Hundreds of educators have been forced into early retirement, non-renewed or laid off. Over 500 positions were eliminated in 2025 under SFUSD’s Fiscal Stabilization Plan to meet state requirements, while more than 900 vacant positions were left unfilled in prior years. Since last May, Sacramento has placed the district under heightened oversight, including a hiring freeze and a requirement that state advisers approve any district plans to bring in new staff.

In a city that established itself as a cultural mecca at the turn of the 20th century, education, art and culture are being hollowed out and reduced to something only money can buy. The K-12 Academy, which shares a campus with the Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the Arts (SOTA), is scheduled to close at the end of the 2025–26 school year. This follows the permanent closure of the San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI),

founded in 1871, and next year’s planned shutdown of the California College of the Arts (CCA), founded in 1907 and the Bay Area’s last nonprofit, independent art and design college.

The defense of educators—and public education itself—cannot be entrusted to the Democratic Party officials who impose austerity or to the union apparatus that enforces it. The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) calls on teachers to reject the tentative agreement and build rank-and-file committees—controlled by educators, together with parents and students—to take the struggle out of the hands of the UESF/AFT bureaucracy and into the hands of the working class.

The IWA-RFC urges teachers to hold discussions and demand mass meetings to review the content of the agreement before any vote. These committees should also link up with educators across schools and districts—including Los Angeles, San Diego and Sacramento—and prepare unified action. There must be no return to work without a democratic vote.

Teachers are not isolated. From Minneapolis to the Bay Area, workers and youth are increasingly raising the question of collective action and a general strike against widening inequality, repression and the drive toward dictatorship and war under the Trump administration. The working class is an immensely powerful force, but only if it is organized independently of the political parties and union officials tied to corporate power.

The defense of educators—and public education itself—must come from the working class. We urge teachers to draw the lessons of the role played by the Democratic Party and the trade union bureaucracy and to take up the fight to build rank-and-file committees of educators, parents and students to lead this struggle.

The IWA-RFC will assist educators in establishing a rank-and-file committee. For more information, fill out the form below.



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