

Los Angeles school district announces hundreds of job cuts

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On Tuesday, the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education (LAUSD) voted 4 to 3 for massive budget cuts in the next 2026-27 school year. Some 3,200 layoff notices will be sent out and at least 657 jobs cut. LAUSD employs 83,000 workers, including teaching assistants, counselors, administrators and maintenance employees.

LA Schools Superintendent Alberto Carvalho admitted that even the cuts may not go far enough. The district said it expects to need 350 fewer elementary and 400 fewer high school teachers next year, mainly due to attrition.

While some educators may be moved from one school to another, the district said it does not plan to issue layoff notices to teachers for the 2026-2027 school year.

The LAUSD board is also planning to close schools in future budgets to close funding gaps. Its “fiscal stabilization” plan states, “with available reserves already being fully utilized, further reductions will be necessary based on the multi-year projections.”

Los Angeles schools are in the midst of a major funding crisis, the result not of unexpected circumstances but deliberate policies under both parties. A major part of the LA public school budget comes from the State of California, which contributes \$24,000 per student. During the early years of the COVID-19 pandemic, federal relief funding provided a reserve that made up for the reduction in state funds.

Since the turn of this century student enrollment has fallen by 40 percent, without school closings or reductions in staff. (Across the state of California, there are now approximately 400,000 less K-12 students than in 2000.)

The COVID-19 supplemental funding was allowed to expire by the Biden administration in 2024, triggering

massive funding crises in school districts across the country. This year LA schools anticipate an \$877 million deficit, and \$443 million in 2027. To make up for that the district is contemplating \$1.4 billion in budget cuts.

The so-called “reduction in force” (RIF) is meant to save \$250 million. Districts throughout the state are required to send out the layoff notices before March 15; and they must arrive at a final decision this June, with layoffs taking effect in August.

The cuts come after 35,000 teachers in the district voted overwhelmingly to strike earlier this month. The teachers have been without a contract since last June and are calling for at least a 16 percent pay raise. The district has offered 2.5 percent.

Following Tuesday’s decision, United Teachers Los Angeles Vice President Julie Van Winkle declared that giving employees their jobs back after receiving a pink slip is part of LAUSD’s strategy to “bring the morale down so that the teachers will demand less from the district.”

Tuesday’s decision is an attack on the democratic rights of students’ right to quality education. Yet UTLA has yet to announce any strike action to demand funding for high quality education in the country’s second-largest school district. What is more, talks between the union and the district formally reached an impasse in December.

Contracts expired last summer for teachers in almost every major city in the state, but the California Teachers Association (CTA) has kept them on the job under a campaign they hypocritically titled “We Can’t Wait,” in spite of the immense potential for a unified statewide movement.

Last week, over 6,000 teachers struck in San Francisco, the first major district to strike since last

year's expirations. That strike, taking place in the center of the tech industry flush with cash from the AI bubble, raised the potential for a working class movement against inequality. But the United Educators San Francisco (UESF) shut the strike down over the weekend, with a deal brokered by the city's Democratic Mayor Daniel Lurie and former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Conditions exist for a broader movement linking Los Angeles teachers with the wider working class. In addition to other teachers across the state, 40,000 academic workers at the University of California system have authorized a strike, as over 31,000 Kaiser healthcare workers in California and Hawaii and 4,000 New York City nurses remain on strike.

Student walkouts are spreading across the country in opposition to ICE attacks on immigrants, including operations near schools.

Many students in LAUSD live in terror of ICE in their neighborhoods, with many afraid to go to school and parents are afraid to take them. "The school where my kids go, the only thing we've gotten since the ICE raids is a wallet size paper that says you don't have to open your door or talk," Ivan Ulloa, a father of two students at Fulbright Elementary in LA's San Fernando Valley, told the *LA Public Press* last month.

Meanwhile, teachers unions across the country have allowed school administrations to threaten their members against encouraging or participating in walkouts. While many began to raise the need for a general strike following the ICE murder of Alex Pretti in Minneapolis, the UTLA promoted instead a symbolic "no spending day," while citing "student safety" to prohibit work stoppages.

Rank-and-file teachers must take urgent and decisive action. By striking they would be joining the many strikes taking place across the country of educators, healthcare workers and workers in many industries.

The defense of public education requires the intervention of workers themselves. Some of this is already happening, with parents and teachers forming volunteer groups to watch out for ICE agents and to escort children to school.

In defending quality education for all, teachers have a crucial role in leading the working class. This means developing a network of rank-and-file committees and groups at schools across the city, linking teachers with

other sections of the working class, to discuss strategy and prepare action in defense of immigrants and the right to education.



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