

Stop Trump's war on Iran! No to school layoffs! For a general strike!

## Los Angeles teachers announce April 14 strike as thousands rally against austerity and war

Kimie Saito, Joshua Rodriguez  
20 March 2026

Thousands of educators and school workers rallied at Gloria Molina Grand Park in downtown Los Angeles Wednesday as United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) and SEIU Local 99 announced a possible April 14 strike against the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD).

The "Fight for LA" rally brought together UTLA, SEIU Local 99 and the Associated Administrators of Los Angeles, representing more than 68,000 workers. A strike would shut down the nation's second-largest school district, affecting hundreds of thousands of students.

The announcement comes amid a deepening crisis of public education and American capitalism. It unfolds alongside the illegal US-Israeli war against Iran, which has killed thousands of civilians and threatens wider regional escalation.

The war and the assault on education are bound up with the same class policy. While trillions are funneled into militarism, social programs are slashed, including billions from education. At the same time, class struggle is intensifying, with strikes and protests by workers across the country.

As the Trump administration carries out its criminal and illegal war on Iran, the class struggle has expanded. Currently, the largest meatpackers' strike is taking place in Greeley, Colorado; in January, there were mass protests in Minneapolis against the federal occupation murders of Renée Good and Alex Pretti; and in February, massive strikes by healthcare workers in New York City and California and Hawaii for over a month.

Reporters for the *World Socialist Web Site* spoke to several teachers about the potential strike and the way forward. Many described students living in fear of ICE raids, chronic understaffing, lack of basic supplies and deteriorating school conditions, as well as their opposition to the war on Iran.

Nicholas, a high school English teacher in South LA, said, "I'm fighting for not just what teachers deserve but also what our students deserve, which is mental health services. ... Almost all my students are currently living in fear of their family members being unlawfully detained or deported.

"I was hoping for the January 30 strike to kind of be like a general strike ... a combined effort amongst workers, among all sectors of the economy.

"About this new war on Iran, this government is fighting wars with the money that is supposed to be ... used for what we need as Americans."

Christian, a third grade teacher with 25 years in LAUSD, opposed Trump's war on Iran and supported the call for a general strike by the working class. He said, "I love it! We are the backbone of America. There are the elites and the one percenters, but really we are the backbone. We're really the foundation of this culture. And there needs to be more of a focus on that.

"I mean we are the people. For the people, by the people, as the Constitution stated. And it's funny, I'm teaching third graders, and we're learning about the branches of government and the checks and balances of our system. And is it working now? Because I talk about current issues in class. I bring up international affairs....

"I noticed that whenever there's a major need, the money appears out of nowhere. But in the case of teachers, why does it always seem like we're the last in receiving support?

"Right now there's a war on Iran. ... What is the cost of this war? The human cost ... It's magnified. It's horrible."

Edward, a paraprofessional and SEIU 99 member, said, "One of the major problems we face is the learning environment. It needs to be maintained; it needs to be kept clean. We need more staff on board.

"Because of the budget cuts, they're trying [to] lay off school bus drivers and other staff. They say it's because the funds are low, but they should be hiring more staff.

"These ICE raids are crazy. The majority of our communities immigrated here to make a better life for themselves ... It's not right that they have to live in fear."

Hunter, a campus aide and SEIU 99 member, said, "I don't feel like the resources of society are going to what we need. There's a literacy crisis. ... I see the Department of Education

being gutted, and that's not right. The money should be going back into this place.

"We see a lot of resources being redirected to ICE and this new war in Iran. We are absolutely anti-ICE. And I have no faith in a war with Iran. We do not need to be there.

"I'm working and living in downtown LA, with a population of students who are primarily affected by ICE. I know students and their families who were deported by ICE or impacted by it.

"If there's a general strike against all this, I would support it. The government's been targeting LA a lot. LA was built on strikes, and we should continue to do so."

### **The way forward: Rank-and-file committees and independent political action**

The decisive issue facing Los Angeles educators is political independence. The struggle cannot be left to union bureaucracies tied to the Democratic Party and corporate interests.

UTLA President Cecily Myart-Cruz, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America, has called a strike for April 14, demanding a 17 percent raise, higher starting pay, no layoffs, smaller class sizes and expanded staffing. SEIU Local 99 leader Max Arias, meanwhile, has kept 30,000 low-paid school workers without a contract for two and a half years, many earning just \$35,000 annually and facing cuts to hours and benefits, even as the union proposes a limited "Unfair Practice Charge" action.

Teachers authorized a strike by 94 percent in January and have worked without a contract since June. UTLA has delayed action for months, diverting opposition into "fact-finding" and negotiations while layoffs and budget cuts proceed. This follows the pattern of the California Teachers Association, which has kept tens of thousands working under expired contracts statewide under its fraudulent "We Can't Wait" campaign.

The recent San Francisco strike is a warning. More than 6,000 educators walked out with broad support, only for the union to shut it down within days and impose a deal backed by Democratic officials that delivered a 2 percent annual raise, a real pay cut.

The delayed April 14 strike date provides time for another backroom deal, as seen in other cities. The role of the DSA underscores the effort to channel growing opposition into the Democratic Party, which, no less than the Republicans, has overseen the ongoing destruction of public education.

Conditions exist for a broad movement. Tens of thousands of UC workers have authorized a strike, while recent struggles by nurses and teachers have shown the willingness of workers to fight. But each has been isolated and shut down by the unions.

Educators must take control of their struggle by forming rank-and-file committees independent of UTLA, CTA and AFT, and link up with workers across industries to carry the fight forward.

These committees must fight for demands that meet the urgency of the crisis:

**No layoffs and full funding of public education.** The claim that there is no money is a fraud. The wealth exists—in the hands of the billionaires and in the war budget. The ill-gotten fortunes of the tech and financial oligarchy must be expropriated and redirected to education, healthcare and social needs.

• **Unite all California educators in a statewide strike,** expanding to a national movement and linking teachers with healthcare workers, logistics workers and every section of the working class in struggle.

**Stop the illegal US-Israeli war against Iran.** The war is not only a crime against the people of Iran, it is the instrument through which the ruling class imposes austerity and dictatorship at home. The billions being poured into bombs and military operations must be redirected to schools, hospitals and housing.

• **Defend immigrant students and families.** No deportations. Abolish ICE, CBP and DHS. No ICE raids at schools or anywhere else.

•

Drop all charges against teachers and students who have participated in anti-ICE walkouts.

• **Break with the Democrats and Republicans.** The Democratic Party is not an ally of teachers or the working class. From Biden's elimination of COVID relief funds to Newsom's imposition of austerity on California schools to the Democrats' bipartisan support for the war in Iran, this party serves the same ruling oligarchy as the Republicans.

The April 14 strike date, if it is to mean anything, must be the beginning of a genuine struggle, not the culmination of a pressure campaign designed to extract a few percentage points of wage increase before sending teachers back to work under worsened conditions. This requires wresting control of the struggle from the bureaucracy and placing it in the hands of rank-and-file workers themselves.

The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) calls on educators, parents and students to take up this fight. Contact the *World Socialist Web Site* to discuss the formation of a rank-and-file committee at your school or workplace.



To contact the WSWWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)**