

Los Angeles teachers unions announces sellout in bid to sabotage district-wide strike

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Organize to fight the sellout agreement! Fill out the form below to build the *Los Angeles Educators Rank-and-File Committee*.

On Sunday, with a Tuesday strike date looming for 70,000 Los Angeles education workers, United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) has announced a tentative agreement with the Los Angeles Unified School District. The move is aimed at blocking unified strike action with 30,000 school support staff in Service Employees International Union Local 99.

Later Sunday evening, the Associated Administrators of Los Angeles (AALU) announced a deal for 3,000 administrators.

The UTLA deal is already provoking widespread anger. It was worked out behind closed doors, without rank-and-file oversight and announced in direct defiance of the strike mandate.

“UTLA has to be working against teachers. They gave in for such a low amount,” one poster commented on the union’s Instagram page. “This is pathetic, we’re going to be back where we started two years from now,” said another. And a third: “This is not good enough! We didn’t say anything about settling for less!”

Others stressed the need for action to push the teachers’ advantage. “We CAN get everything we’re demanding if we were willing to not give in to less than what we are asking.” Another wrote: “SEIU and AALA still have not reached an agreement. It’s all or nothing come on!!!”

Educators should reject this agreement, made in defiance of their clearly expressed democratic decision to strike, and join classified workers and administrators on the picket lines Tuesday. The struggle must go forward but under control by the rank and file, not the apparatus which controls the union.

Educators should develop networks of rank-and-file strike committees at every site linking up all workers, regardless of union or job classification, in order to carry

out a united struggle and appeal for the widest support in the working class of Southern California and beyond.

Such a strike must continue until workers in all three unions win their demands, which should include substantial funding increases for public education to pay for smaller class sizes and inflation-busting wage increases to retain teachers.

The largely immigrant support staff of SEIU Local 99, who survive on only \$35,000, must also have wages brought up to a level that allows them to live decently in one of the most expensive urban areas in the country.

The contents of the deal show it is a miserable sellout.

- The headline wage increase for teachers of 11.65 percent over two years does not meet the cost of living in Los Angeles. Even by the union’s own framing, this is only the so-called “average” increase, with some teachers receiving as little as 8 percent. The cost of housing, food and basic necessities will continue to outpace these limited gains, leaving the fundamental crisis untouched.

- Provisions on special education are cosmetic. The touted 20:1 caseload for Resource Specialist Teachers remains far above what is required. The overage penalties of \$500 to \$1,000 per classification period are negligible and structured so loosely that they will have no meaningful impact.

- According to the union’s highlights, the deal includes unspecified “contractual commitments in support of immigrant students and families.” But this means little under conditions where the Trump administration is flouting the Constitution and deploying ICE to occupy major American cities. The real solution to Trump’s immigration Gestapo is the mass mobilization of the working class, which the UTLA is undermining with this agreement.

There is nothing to suggest this deal will do anything to prevent massive cuts under the district’s “fiscal stabilization plan,” slashing hundreds of millions of

dollars to address an \$877 million forecasted deficit for the next school year.

This last point is critical. A teachers contract in San Francisco which shut down a four-day strike was followed quickly by dozens of layoff notices as the district pursued its own “fiscal recovery” program. A contract in Chicago last year was followed quickly by hundreds of layoffs. No doubt, administrators and the union bureaucrats are concealing similar cuts, to be announced before the ink is dry on this deal.

Virtually every major school district in the United States is confronting similar deficits. This is the product of bipartisan policies. The Biden administration created a nationwide fiscal crisis in late 2024 by allowing pandemic supplemental funding to expire. Now the Trump administration is going even further, threatening to dismantle the Department of Education and federal programs on which millions of students rely.

This is a class policy. Trump summed up the content of this in an Easter lunch two weeks ago, when he declared, “Don’t send any money for daycare, [because] we’re fighting wars.” “Medicaid, Medicare, all these individual things” had to be cut so that Washington could focus with only “one thing, military protection.” In other words, the working class and public services must be bled dry to pay for criminal wars for profit in Iran and elsewhere, to defend the interests of a ruling elite which is out of control.

Significantly, the UTLA announced the deal the same weekend that talks to end the war against Iran broke down, leading to Trump announcing renewed military action to block the Strait of Hormuz.

The union bureaucracy is a part of this political conspiracy. Not only the sellout deal but the state-mandated mediation process which produced this demonstrates it. California’s Public Employment Relations Board (PERB), whose members are appointed by Democratic Governor Gavin Newsom, appointed a former official fact-finder, Donald Raczka, a longtime former official in the American Federation of Teachers. He recommended an 11 percent raise over two years, along with a one-time 3 percent payment, aligning closely with the district’s position.

“Over the last 14 months, educators were told to settle for less while the district sat on funds meant for classrooms and students,” the *Los Angeles Times* quoted UTLA President Cecily Myart-Cruz as saying. In reality, the UTLA has left workers on the job without a contract for the entire school year. In January, UTLA forced

through a separate vote on a concessionary healthcare agreement, locking in givebacks on medical benefits before the broader contract struggle had even come to a head.

This is part of a statewide campaign by the California Teachers Association, ironically branded “We Can’t Wait,” to sabotage the potential for statewide action as contracts for most major urban school districts expired at the same time.

Only three districts to date have gone on strike: West Contra Costa County, Twin Rivers and San Francisco. In San Francisco, the strike was shut down following the intervention of former House speaker Nancy Pelosi and Randi Weingarten, the politically well-connected president of the AFT.

A general rule has emerged: The greater the potential for a mass working class movement, the more shamelessly and openly the union bureaucracy moves to try to disrupt and sabotage it. The year, which began with mass demonstrations in Minneapolis against ICE in which a general strike became a topic of discussion, has already seen a number of struggles which have been blocked shut down.

This includes, in addition to the California teachers, strikes by over 45,000 nurses on the West Coast and New York City, a new sellout by the Writers Guild and others. The United Auto Workers recently shut down a strike at Bath Iron Works, a military contractor building guided missile destroyers, in the midst of the Iran war.

This is generating increasing opposition from below, but it must be organized and given conscious direction. The decisive task is to build new organizations of struggle, independent of the apparatus.

Rank-and-file committees must be established in every school and workplace, linking educators with classified staff, administrators and broader sections of workers.

These committees must take control of the struggle, coordinate action across unions and industries and prepare defiance of any attempt to impose this agreement. The initiative must pass into the hands of workers themselves, who have both the numbers and the objective strength to carry forward a unified fight against austerity, war and ultimately, the capitalist system which produces them.



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