

UTLA officially rejects 5% salary offer and unacceptable class-size proposals



From left to right: Jesus Quinonez (UTLA attorney), Victoria Casas (Valley East Board Member), Julie Van Winkle (North Area Board Member), Mary Tello (Harbor Area Board Member), Noah Lippe-Klein (West Area Board Member), Betty Forrester (UTLA/AFT VP), Linda Gordon (Health & Human Services Board Member), Cecily Myart-Cruz (UTLA/NEA VP), Jeff Good (UTLA Executive Director), and Juan Ramirez (Elementary VP).

Bargaining update—UTLA held firm at the table in today's session, and officially rejected the Districts 5% salary offer and unacceptable class-size proposals from last week. The District did not present any new proposals. In the absence of anything new from LAUSD, UTLA's team reiterated our strongly held position that the District can do more on salary and must do more to address class sizes, health and human services staffing ratios, ending TGDC, the rights of housed teachers, and the need for stakeholder voices at the school level through leadership councils. Our team ended the session by demanding that the District review its positions and come back to the next session with new proposals on all of the above.

UTLA's current salary demand is 8.5% for the 2014-15 school year, with an automatic reopener on salary in 2015-2016, a \$1,000 per member stipend for supplies, exploration of retirement incentives, and six voluntary Common Core planning days to be used at educator discretion between now and June 2016.

UTLA has identified \$59 million in Common Core money in the District budget that must be spent by June 30, 2015, and could be used to fund some of the voluntary days. The District claims the money has already been sent to school sites but has no knowledge of how or if it has been spent.

De La Torre Elementary teacher and Harbor Area Board member Mary Tello was at the table today as part of UTLA's bargaining team.

"Being able to represent our students, parents, and teachers was so empowering," she said. "Speaking for them and pushing for our demands to be heard is why I volunteer and serve. It's been an honor."

North Area Board member Julie Van Winkle was also on today's team.

"I told the District about what's really going on at school sites: teachers are teaching in overcrowded, filthy classrooms, and they have outdated textbooks," she said. "We are expected to completely overhaul the way we teach with CCSS, but the District is not giving us the materials and support we need to be successful. The worst part of all of this is that the District is doing a disservice to our students by creating these impossible conditions for classroom teachers."

The next bargaining session is Wednesday, February 18.