



## **UTLA to consider limited expansion of Pilot Schools**

### Local control is a key element of the Pilot model.

LAUSD and UTLA's negotiating teams have agreed to an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) on Pilot Schools that UTLA's governing bodies will consider for ratification on December 10. UTLA entered into talks with LAUSD to increase the number of Pilot Schools after some sites expressed interest in the model, which aligns with UTLA's goal of local control and putting teachers at the center of decision making.

**Having an array of options for teacher-driven reform is our best strategy to improve student learning and to fight takeover by outside operators.** Here's a closer look at the MOU:

**Limited expansion:** The agreement would allow no more than 20 additional Pilot Schools for the 2010-11 school year. By limiting the number, UTLA can address continuing concerns with Pilot School agreements in the future while still allowing teachers who are already pursuing the model (such as at the "focus" schools) to use it. Pilots would be established through an RFP (Request for Proposal) process, overseen by a joint UTLA-LAUSD committee.

**Teachers would have to vote for a Pilot:** The MOU does not require or impose Pilot status but does allow an existing SLC or school to become a Pilot if a minimum of 67% of UTLA members in that SLC or school vote in favor (and the RFP is successful). All employees work in Pilot Schools on a voluntary basis and may request a voluntary transfer at the end of any school year.

**Schools are free from LAUSD mandates, and key decisions are made by teachers and other stakeholders:** Each Pilot School will have a Governing School Council, the composition of which follows the School Site Council Model and includes UTLA members. To encourage innovation and school-site decision making, Pilot Schools must follow state Ed Code but they are exempt from School Board rules and District policies. Instead, the school's governing body decides the budget, curriculum, professional development, and so on.

**UTLA members work under a revised contract designed by that school:** All UTLA members who choose to work in Pilot Schools maintain their full status as UTLA members—including salary, benefits, seniority, and STRS retirement—but they would work under a modified UTLA-LAUSD contract. The changes—called an "Election to Work" agreement—are developed specifically for that school by the governing body and approved by a vote of the staff. The Election to Work agreement covers the length of the school day, school year, extra duty time, amount of professional development, and possible additional teacher evaluation measures. *This agreement can be rejected by a 50% + 1 vote of UTLA members.* UTLA members also retain all Education Code rights.

**This MOU makes improvements on the Belmont Pilot Schools agreement:** This MOU is separate from the agreement for the Pilot Schools currently operating in the Belmont Zone of Choice and has a number of improvements. The threshold to reject the "Election to Work" agreement has been lowered from 67% to 50%, and a greater portion of the UTLA-LAUSD contract stays in force and is subject to the grievance process. To recognize that employees have a right to be active in their union, UTLA members can receive up to 10 days of release time for UTLA business and up to 25 days if elected to UTLA's Board. In addition, chapter chairs at Pilot Schools retain the right to propose agenda items for faculty meetings. The agreement is in effect through 2010 and negotiations can be reopened after June 2011.

*The full text of the MOU can be read at [utla.net](http://utla.net).*