



A.J. Duffy, UTLA President

September 1, 2009

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Dear Substitute Teacher:

I am writing in response to the many phone calls and e-mails that I have been receiving regarding a side letter to our contract that I signed giving RIF'd teachers priority to work as subs. (The full text of the side letter is posted at utla.net.)

UTLA agreed to sign this **ONE YEAR ONLY, nonprecedent-setting** agreement because, as you probably know, many of our schools were decimated by the loss of a large percentage of their teaching staff—from 20 to 30 to 40 percent to, in one case, 50 percent of the teaching staff was RIF'd. UTLA wanted to stabilize those schools' staffs to the greatest extent possible, while we were trying to negotiate the rehiring of those RIF'd teachers. Negotiations went on for over six weeks and fell apart at the last minute when the state budget deal created an additional \$280-million-plus deficit in the district's budget.

It is important for you to understand that we believed that the RIF'd teachers would be, for the most part, rehired at their own schools and put in their original classrooms as time went on and that the effect upon the regular substitute pool would be minimal. In addition, because we were certain that the negotiations referenced above would result in an agreement with the district to bring all of these people back, we signed the side letter (agreement) with the district to make sure that the RIF'd teachers would not sever their relationship with LAUSD and therefore be permanently lost to their schools. Many of those teachers had been working within smaller learning communities to develop curriculum and build relationships with students that are vital to the effective education of those schools' students.

UTLA did not inform its members of the nature of the talks to bring back the RIF'd teachers because the district and union had agreed to a "cone of silence" during the negotiations, so as to allow talks to proceed without the usual posturing and game playing that frequently accompany bargaining talks. Despite our best efforts, due to the state budget crisis,



negotiations did ultimately break down, but not until late August. For that reason, I was unable to let Substitute Director Leonard Segal, Substitute Committee Chair Dave Peters, or UTLA Secondary VP Gregg Solkovits, point officer for substitute issues, know about the talks or about the side letter until after I signed it.

It is our belief, however, that as the traditional school year starts, more and more of the RIF'd teachers will be rehired by their original schools or will find jobs in other school districts. **This means that ultimately, most LAUSD subs will get their usual calls and be able to work.** In the meantime, UTLA is talking with the district about how the district and the union can work together to make sure that subs who are eligible for health benefits can work at least one day a month to keep their benefits.

In addition, I want to emphasize that teachers retain the right to request the sub of their choice, and we are asking you to contact your UTLA area representative **as soon as you find out and have verification that a teacher's request to have you work for them was denied.** We cannot enforce our contract with the district if we do not know it is being violated.

I apologize for not working more closely with your Substitute Board of Director member Leonard Segal, Substitute Committee Chair Dave Peters, and point officer for substitute issues Gregg Solkovits. I should also have done a better job of communicating this to you sooner, but as you most likely know, our union is at a critical junction in its existence. The Board of Education just voted to potentially give away 50 new schools and more than 200 lower-performing schools to charters and private operators. If in fact this district becomes charterized and/or privatized, up to a quarter of our members—including subs—could lose their jobs. This would be nothing short of disaster for all of us. Please rest assured that not a day goes by in which UTLA is not acutely aware of the difficult situation all of our substitute members are in at this time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Duffy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

A.J. Duffy
President, United Teachers Los Angeles