Community joins UTLA at bargaining table

Parents and community groups joined UTLA’s bargaining team in our September 15 session to present a bold package of contract proposals—developed through parent-community meetings—to improve the educational opportunities of our students and to achieve the Schools LA Students Deserve. The community members and UTLA presented nine demands on critical issues such as affordable housing, expanding early education, supporting immigrant families, increasing per-pupil funding, and expanding green space at schools (see flipside). These common good demands are essential to the survival, sustainability, and thriving of LAUSD.

Bringing the community to the table during contract negotiations—often referred to as “bargaining for the common good”—has been practiced by other unions to amplify the power of collective bargaining to make improvements for the larger community. Having the irreplaceable voice of parents and community at the table pays exponential benefits: It brings reality and depth to our proposals, challenges the district to think outside the traditional bargaining box, and strengthens our alliances for the long-term work ahead.

In an ironic twist, after UTLA presented our robust package, district officials made an anemic proposal to increase the amount UTLA reimburses the district for releasing our members for union work and admitted that they are pretty much done with presenting new proposals. While UTLA and community partners presented extensive ideas for better learning, living, and working conditions, the district didn’t offer a single proposal linked to students and continues to fail in addressing the need for competitive pay for the educators who work with students every day.

Through our contract campaign, we are challenging LAUSD to use this moment to accelerate action on the public education funding crisis and to reimagine the school district-community relationship to achieve the Schools LA Students Deserve.

First healthcare bargaining session: Wed., September 20
Next full bargaining sessions: October 4 and 12

COMMUNITY VOICES

Green spaces benefit kids

“Our kids will benefit a lot if we could have more green spaces. I have heard about the wonderful vegetable garden at Grand View on the Westside of L.A. I would love to see my grandchildren learning about growing vegetables and other plants.”

Maria de la Luz Benitez
Parent/grandparent
Harmony Elementary

BARGAINING ACTION ALERT

Big Red T Day: September 26

Want to send a message about how you feel about the district’s 2% non-raise offer? Or about LAUSD threats to cut health benefits and increase class sizes? Or the lack of any movement at the table on critical issues such as class size, staffing, testing, and more? Then WEAR RED on Tuesday, September 26. Show the district that you stand behind your bargaining team and our righteous demands for the Schools LA Students Deserve!

SPREAD THE RED! Post your photos on social media: Use the hashtag #BigRedT and we will repost and grab for our UNITED TEACHER red T page.
Snapshot look at community proposals

Full package posted at utla.net/members/bargaining. These demands join those around salary, health benefits, staffing, class size, reducing standardized testing, more accountability for administrators around school discipline, and more decision-making for local councils.

Affordable housing and student homelessness: Provide new supports for homeless youth and students’ families facing eviction by training school counselors on resources and holding tenant rights clinics at schools. Identify surplus LAUSD land that could be used for affordable housing.

Early education: Give more children the educational start they deserve by expanding the number of seats available for early education in LAUSD.

Green space on campus: Remove unused classroom bungalows and replace them with green space in underserved neighborhoods.

Community schools: Designate 20 schools in high-need areas for Community Schools transformation. Community Schools are fully funded sites with a well-rounded curriculum, wraparound support services, positive discipline practices, and transformational parent and community engagement.

Teacher training fund: Support SEIU Local 99 proposal to create Training Fund for teacher aides and other school employees who want to earn teaching credentials. Fund would help address teacher shortage and encourage people in the community to pursue teaching as a career.

Support for immigrant families: Create $1 million Immigrant Family Legal Defense Fund to support families of LAUSD students who are fighting deportation.

Student rights and support: End disruptive random searches of students that waste instructional time and do not make schools safer. Advocate for free rides on MTA buses and trains for all LAUSD students to ensure reliable transportation to school. Support efforts to end disproportionate ticketing of African American transit riders.

School accountability: Require transparency by charter school operators on student suspensions/expulsions and “push outs” to traditional schools. Require a community and educational impact report and community meetings before a charter operator can “co-locate” on a public school campus.

Revenue for public education: Address funding crisis in California (ranked 46th in per-pupil spending) by advocating for LA schools to be funded by $20,000 per pupil by 2020 (the 20 by 20 campaign).

Community groups & parents at the table with UTLA

—Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE)
—The Brotherhood Crusade
—First 5 LA
—Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE)
—Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE)
—Coalition for Humane Immigration Reform (CHIRLA)
—Students Deserve
—Parents from Trinity and Harmony elementary schools

Most of the community organizations belong to the Reclaim Our Schools LA coalition.

Dressed in red: UTLA’s bargaining team for the September 15 session