We Are The 98%

In a defining moment for public education in Los Angeles, 98% of UTLA members voted to strike, if one becomes necessary

These strike authorization vote results — including a record-breaking 83% voter turnout — are a powerful affirmation of our bargaining demands as well as an indictment of the agenda led by Supt. Austin Beutner, to starve our schools, rather than reinvest in them.

LAUSD has an astonishing $1.86 billion in reserves. Claiming financial ruin while stockpiling money is an ongoing pattern. Last year, $416 million in books and supplies was kept away from our classrooms. LAUSD has a history of pointing to an apocalyptic third year out in their budget, which never materializes. It gives them cover to go after our jobs, our healthcare and our retirement.

In response to the crisis we deal with in our classrooms, Beutner has been holding “RSVP only” PR events where he and other high-ranking district officials point blame at teachers. Last week, Beutner invited media to a closed “community” event. Without a hint of irony, Beutner spoke to the invite-only crowd about the need for greater transparency.

With less than 24-hour notice, more than 100 parents, students and educators protested outside the event at the RFK Community Schools after being denied access. In a jaw-dropping move, Beutner kicked out a UTLA member from the event — a librarian who was there to work and to listen to his speech.

His behavior is an insult not just to educators, but to every family in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

After 17 months of bargaining, Beutner delayed mediation to September 27—this unprecedented 56 day delay is a slap in the face.

Enough is enough. Our superintendent thinks he is above the law and can wield his power without scrutiny.

In light of our 98% vote, we demand Beutner immediately direct his bargaining team to meet with us in an expedited mediation process to reach an agreement that respects educators, our students and our communities.

Seeing Red on September 27

Let’s show Beutner and the district we are united behind our fight for a fair contract by wearing red on Tuesday, Sept 25 and on the first day of mediation, Sept. 27. Take photos and post on social media using the hashtags #UTLAStrong and #SchoolBeutner. Post about what you and your students need to succeed.

Transparency Alert: What is Supt. Beutner hiding?

On Sept. 18, The American Federation of Teachers was forced to file a lawsuit against LAUSD for withholding the Superintendent’s calendar in response to a Public Records Act Request. This willingness to break laws potentially extends to the consultants Beutner may be hiring. Alarm bells are ringing that he has entered into a close partnership with Mercury Public Affairs — most recently in the news for the firm’s likely violations of the Foreign Agents Registration Act in the case of Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort. Mercury has a pattern of treating civil rights issues as mere public image problems, as it did when it worked with GOP operatives to spin the Flint water crisis.

Give Kids a Chance
Stop Starving Our Public Schools