



## STATEMENT FROM THE UTLA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

# Imagine Police-Free Schools With the Supports Students Deserve

Dear UTLA Member,

June 10, 2020

As millions of people across the country and around the world march in protest against anti-Black racism and police violence we have a historic opportunity to address racist systems and policies that have pervaded our society and our schools for the entire history of the United States.

As educators in a school system that serves 88% students of color and more Black students than any other school system in the state we have a clear view of how racism infects every element of our society.

We know that the massive underfunding of our schools is directly connected to the racist resistance of many in our state to pay for the education of Black and Brown students.

UTLA has a history of standing with those fighting for racial justice and supporting students who are leading in the movement.

The common good demands of our last contract campaign — against “random” searches, for immigrant support, for green space, for housing — were all understood as part of a racial justice struggle and helped unite the community behind us.

In April the UTLA Board of Directors and House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly to support BLM-LA’s Black Los Angeles Demands in Light of Covid-19, which includes a call to defund the police and redirect resources to community needs.

For years UTLA has been working with organizations such as Black Lives Matter Los Angeles, Students Deserve and Reclaim our Schools LA and other organizations to address racism in school discipline policies. We used research from institutions such as Harvard, Columbia, UCLA and the ACLU to inform our work to rethink policing in schools, which to date has included stopping ticketing of students for tardiness, ending random searches and eliminating tanks from the LASPD weapons arsenal.

LAUSD has the largest school police force in the United States and even though only 8% of the LAUSD students are Black those students account for 25% of all LAUSD School Police arrests.

Shockingly, 25% of LAUSD School Police arrests are of elementary and middle school students.

Behaviors that should be addressed within the school community are instead outsourced to police — particularly when Black students are involved — and such infractions create a record that follows a young person and limits their opportunities, directly contributing to the school to prison pipeline.

The use of random searches, pepper spray and other aggressive tactics criminalize and have long lasting impacts on our students. They make kids feel unsafe.

As the Board of Directors of UTLA, an ethnically and racially diverse body, we believe that we do not need armed police roaming our halls, we need counselors who are provided with resources, nurses with sufficient medical supplies, and librarians with enough books. That is why we voted to call for the elimination of the LAUSD school police budget and redirect resources to student needs, with a particular focus on the needs of Black students.

We believe that the school police as a body must be eliminated. We believe that school police staff can train to do new jobs outside policing to support students, if they so choose. This is not about the police as people, this is about policing as an inappropriate institution in our schools. Police must be removed from our schools.

While it may be challenging, we are asking all educators to imagine a school community where instead of calling the school police over a fight between children, a mental health professional who arrives within minutes is called. Imagine a school community where behavioral issues are addressed by giving the student material and emotional support both inside and outside of the school.

This is our responsibility as educators in this historic moment.

We look forward to talking with you more about how to build the type of school communities our students need.

Sincerely,

## **UTLA OFFICERS**

Alex Caputo-Pearl  
*President*

Cecily Myart-Cruz  
*NEA Vice President and President-Elect*

Juan Ramirez  
*AFT Vice President*

Gloria Martinez  
*Elementary Vice President*

Daniel Barnhart  
*Secondary Vice President*

Alex Orozco  
*Treasurer*

Arlene Inouye  
*Secretary*

Julie Van Winkle  
*Incoming Secondary Vice President*

## **UTLA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **North Area**

Karla Griego (Area Chair)  
Rosa Jimenez (Incoming)  
Mark Ramos  
Rebecca Solomon

### **South Area**

Maria Miranda (Area Chair)  
Aydé Bravo  
L. Cynthia Mathews  
Claudia Silva (incoming)

### **East Area**

Adrian Tamayo (Area Chair)  
Marcela Chagoya (Incoming)  
Ingrid Gunnell  
Gillian Russom  
Yolanda Tamayo

### **West Area**

Erika Jones (Area Chair)  
Georgia Flowers-Lee  
Marie Germaine (Incoming)  
Noah Lippe-Klein  
Larry Shoham  
Jennifer Villaryo (Incoming)

### **Central Area**

Stacie Webster (Area Chair)  
Anibal Avila-Hernandez (Incoming)  
Kelly Flores  
Tomás Flores  
Mark Muskrath (Incoming)  
Claudia Rodriguez

### **Valley East Area**

Scott Mandel (Area Chair)  
Victoria Casas  
Jennifer Gottlieb (Incoming)  
Mel House  
Hector Perez-Roman

### **Valley West Area**

Melodie Bitter  
Wendi Davis  
Javier Romo

### **Harbor Area**

Steve Seal (Area Chair)  
Rosa Diaz (Incoming)  
Phylis Hoffman  
Karen Macias  
Jennifer McAfee  
Elizabeth Untalan (Incoming)

### **Adult & Occ. Education**

Matthew Kogan

### **Bilingual Education**

Cheryl L. Ortega

### **Health and Human Services**

Mallorie Evans

### **Special Education**

Deborah Schneider (Incoming)

### **Substitutes**

Benny Madera

### **UTLA-Retired**

John Perez