

Chapter Talking Points

February 22, 2021

Info for chapter leaders

Hold chapter meetings this week

- Chapter leaders have overwhelmingly endorsed organizing with members to oppose returning to school sites for full or hybrid in person instruction without 1) LA County being below the purple tier in terms of Covid 19 infections, 2) vaccines being available to educators, and 3) safety protocols being in place including PPE, social distancing, ventilation and a cleaning regimen.
- **The next step is to hold chapter meetings in every chapter over the next week to engage all UTLA members in this discussion.**
- **Those meetings will be followed by an all member vote March 1 through 5 to determine UTLA's position.**

You can use this [PowerPoint presentation](#) (will download) to lead the discussion in your chapter meeting. You can see the talking points in the Notes Pages view. The presentation is also attached as a [PDF](#) so that you can print it and see the notes, if you find that helpful.

- **REPORT BACK!**
Since this fight could require all of us to act collectively to protect ourselves, our students and our families, it is important that we make sure that we are reaching everyone. Please report on your chapter meeting so that UTLA leaders can focus resources appropriately as we try to reach everyone. Please report on the meeting at [this link](#) – you will be asked to report the date of the chapter meeting, the number of participants, the number of those who were supportive and the number of those who were opposed to this position.

[Power Point presentation](#) (will download)

[PDF of Power Point](#)

[Link to Report chapter meetings](#)

March 3 Area meetings

- Our next Area meetings will be held on Wednesday, March 3. This is a crucial time as we continue to bargain hybrid instructional models, an extended school calendar and the safe return to our schools. Please be sure to attend or have someone representing your site.

Rebuild your Chapter Action Teams Now

- While we are bargaining over hybrid instructional models, the extension of the school calendar, and what constitutes the conditions for a safe return to our schools, it is essential that we build our capacity for collective action at every structural level of the union, including having a Chapter Action Team (CAT) at every school and well-functioning clusters in every area.
- We have to be ready to fight against any attempts by the district, county, or state to force a return to schools before it's safe, and we have to be ready to fight in the near future for more funding from the state and federal governments, more staffing and special education support in future bargaining, and a healthcare agreement beyond 2021. We need to build our capacity to play defense and offense with collective action in a fluid and unpredictable environment.
- CATs are an essential component of this fight. Your team facilitates communication between all members in the group and will help you respond quickly when necessary to take action. If you haven't finished putting your team together, this is the time to do it.

Talking points for chapter meetings

Bargaining update

- Bargaining has shifted to focus on hybrid return plans for how to physically return to schools when conditions are safer. On Thursday, we met with the district but they did not provide enough details nor address the key areas on necessary

conditions for a safe return.

Bargaining an agreement on how to physically return in a hybrid model does not mean such a return is imminent or near. We are bargaining in good faith over “how” to physically return in a hybrid model, and we have told the district that the agreement must include language over “when” to physically return in a hybrid model.

[LAUSD proposal 2-18-21](#)

United for a safe return

- Political pressure is rising to force a return to in-person instruction before we have the necessary conditions and measures in place to ensure the safety of all — district employees, students, and the community.

Sooner rather than later, there could be legislation or another lever that will set an arbitrary date to physically return to schools — a date not set by science or in consultation with classroom practitioners.

UTLA educators have remained strong in our fight against the unsafe return to schools. As a union, we must have deep and wide conversations about how to respond if we receive a mandate to return to in-person teaching before it is safe.

Last Wednesday, more than 900 UTLA Chapter Leaders voted 93% to 7% to organize with members to oppose returning to school sites for full or hybrid in person instruction until:

1. LA County is out of the purple tier
 2. Staff has access to the vaccine
 3. Safety conditions are in place in our schools, such as PPE, social distancing, ventilation and a cleaning regimen
- Be sure to attend all UTLA chapter meetings in the coming days and connect with your colleagues about where you stand on these issues. These are issues we must take on collectively. **This dialogue will be followed by an online vote of the full UTLA membership, March 1 through March 5.**

Educators eligible for vaccines starting March 1

- Educators are among the next group of essential workers in Los Angeles County who will become eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccinations starting March 1. Availability of vaccines, however, is expected to remain limited, and more than 1.3 million people will be eligible under the new guidelines.
- LAUSD has opened its first school-based COVID-19 vaccination center at Roybal Learning Center near downtown Los Angeles, and vaccinations have begun for educators over age 65. District officials are working to open additional school-based sites, including a major one at Hollywood Park, to help educators and other school staff avoid the “vaccine lottery.” We are pressing LAUSD for details on how vaccine signups will roll out.
- The district has notified UTLA of their intent to require COVID-19 vaccination as a condition of employment for all employees. Those with medically verified health risks or “sincerely” held religious beliefs would be exempt.

Black students drive historic win on de-policing schools and investing in Black futures

- In a victory driven by Black students and their stories, the LAUSD School Board this week voted unanimously to cut the school police and invest in Black students. The motion calls for \$25 million to be diverted from the school police department and an additional \$11 million to be spent to support Black students, including:
 - staffing 53 schools with large Black student populations with counselors, ethnic studies, restorative justice counselors, PSWs, PSAs, and other supports
 - bringing School Safety Coaches to every secondary school to build positive relationships and coach students through conflicts
 - creating an LAUSD Division on Black Student Success and a Community Steering Committee

-investing in 10 Community Schools from the 53 schools with large Black student populations

In addition, police officers will no longer be stationed at school campuses, and the use of pepper spray and chokeholds on students are banned.

Over the summer, as the historic movement for Black Lives and racial justice sharpened the focus on issues of policing, the UTLA Board and House both voted overwhelmingly to advocate that LAUSD eliminate the LA school police budget and invest those funds in supporting student mental, social, and emotional health.

[Black Lives Matter at School](#)

[Teaching for Black Lives: UTLA Resources](#)

[AFT Share My Lesson Black History Month Activities](#)

[NEA Black History Month Lessons](#)

Overassessments campaign update

- Our assessment pushback campaign saw hundreds of calls made from parents and educators to LAUSD. Along with these calls, meetings were held with parents all over the city and parents and members engaged and showed leadership and initiative in various ways to end the over assessments of our students in a pandemic.
- Our campaign pushed the district to recommit and engage with UTLA in the testing task force that came out of the strike calling for a reduction of assessments. Unfortunately, Alison Towery - a staunch district bureaucrat - cares more about protecting the status quo during a pandemic than removing the unnecessary and harmful assessments of our students. The Edulastic and Renaissance assessments are still being required.
- We will continue working with our states and national affiliates to suspend the SBAC, but for now we have confirmation that if we are still in distance learning NO SBAC will be administered in LAUSD.

Women's History Month and the Powerful Women of UTLA

- Each of us has a story and a journey. With Women's History Month coming up, we plan to highlight the powerful women in UTLA and provide inspiration to our students, families and communities. The UTLA/NEA Equity Team is inviting you to record and submit a short video (30 seconds max) using the prompts below:

i. I AM _____ (name)

ii. I AM _____ (role)

iii. I AM A WOMAN

iv. I AM UTLA

v. Quick responses:

1. *What brought you to education?*
2. *What does being a woman mean to you?*
3. *What do you hope for the future?*

- Please send submissions to utla.equityteam@gmail.com by Friday, February 26th.

UTLA East and North Areas announce their 49th Annual Ruben Salazar Scholarship

- All graduating seniors enrolled in any LAUSD High School, Continuation School, or High School Completion Program are eligible. Ruben Salazar, a journalist for the Los Angeles Times, was killed in 1970 while covering the National Chicano Moratorium Against the War in Vietnam and the ensuing riot throughout the streets of East Los Angeles.

The Ruben Salazar Scholarship Committee invites graduating seniors to apply and submit a noteworthy piece. The Scholarship application and information may be downloaded at www.utla.net/scholarships. Application form and essay or a poem **must be received by 5:00 PM — Friday, April 16, 2021** via email to ebarrientos@utla.net. Winners will be notified by April 27, 2021. Scholarship presentation will be at the 49th Annual Virtual Awards Program on May 6, 2021.

[Application](#)
[Scholarship flyer](#)

UTLA calendar

Feb. 24: Board of Directors meeting

March 1 - 5: All-member vote on a safe return

March 3: Area Meetings

March 10: PACE/Elementary/Secondary meetings