

Chapter Talking Points

March 8, 2021

Parent Townhall on March 13

- Join "A Safe and Racially Just Return to Schools", a telephone Parent Townhall, on **Saturday, March 13 at 12:30 pm**. With the recent onslaught of media bias and political pressure skewing the facts, we must ensure parents receive accurate information from educators and have the opportunity to engage in a meaningful discussion regarding the all-important question of a safe return to school sites for their children. Encourage members at your site to reach out to parents and invite them to attend. See flyers below for details.
- [English flyer](#)
[Spanish flyer](#)

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

91% YES: UTLA members overwhelmingly unite behind a safe return

- UTLA members have voted overwhelmingly to resist a premature and unsafe physical return to school sites. Over five days of voting March 1 through 5 conducted by Integrity Voting Systems, 24,580 ballots were cast, with 91% Yes ballots (22,480) and 9% No (2,100).

“This vote signals that in these most trying times, our members will not accept a rushed return that would endanger the safety of educators, students, and families,” UTLA President Cecily Myart-Cruz said. The vote result means that members are prepared to refuse to accept an unsafe work assignment but will instead remain committed to distance learning until the three safety criteria are met:

1. LA County is out of the purple tier;
2. staff are either fully vaccinated or provided access to full vaccination;
3. and safety conditions are in place at our schools including PPE, physical distancing, improved ventilation, and daily cleaning.

With COVID vaccines for school staff rolling out and infection rates decreasing, LA County is making progress toward the necessary conditions for a safe return, but we are not there yet. Some educators are having difficulty securing vaccination appointments, infection rates are still too high in many of the hard-hit communities we serve, and COVID variants could change the trajectory of the virus.

We will continue our parent and community outreach with a telephone townhall "A Safe and Racially Just Return to Schools" on **Saturday, March 13 at 12:30 pm**. Invite parents from your school community to join this important discussion on the safe physical return to schools. See flyers for more details and telephone numbers to join.

[English flyer](#)
[Spanish flyer](#)

Bargaining update

- Bargaining with LAUSD continues and is focused primarily on:
- UTLA's proposal for the necessary health and safety conditions to physically return to schools for hybrid instruction, including protocols for vaccination of school staff, COVID testing, health screening, physical distancing, PPE, daily cleaning and disinfecting, ventilation, and other issues, in alignment with our key safety demands.
- Hybrid instructional models for physically reopening schools when these conditions are reached.

UTLA and LAUSD have discussed hybrid schedules over the course of the pandemic. By their nature, hybrid schedules are complicated and imperfect, but our Bargaining Team is working toward the best possible models for educators and students. We are pushing for a hybrid schedule that doesn't include simultaneous teaching (e.g., no Zoom and in-person at the same time) and minimizes any class assignment changes. As part of this process, the district will be surveying student families again, but any hybrid return agreement will ultimately have to be ratified by UTLA members.

Vaccine update

- LAUSD is sending email surveys to educators to assess whether employees have already been vaccinated, have plans to get a vaccination, want to get vaccinated and need help with an appointment, or do not plan to get vaccinated at this time. The link also allows employees to receive a personal access code to schedule appointments through MyTurn. The surveys are first going to employees who have been prioritized for the vaccine, including EEC, elementary, and middle school educators.

We encourage people to participate in the survey. We have demanded access to full vaccination for education staff as a condition for a physical return, and this survey helps the district ascertain who needs access and who doesn't and then allows the district to provide access to an ever broader group.

LAUSD is legally allowed to let principals know who on their staff has been vaccinated, but that information cannot be shared beyond your administrator.

Separate from the survey, LAUSD is emailing educators and school staff who are eligible for vaccinations at LAUSD vaccine centers as the district expands its priority list. All LAUSD educators are eligible for vaccinations at other sites, including Kaiser (even if not a member) and local drug stores. Your pay stub can be proof of status as an educator.

LAUSD employees will be allowed to get vaccinated during the workday, whether through Los Angeles Unified's program or an outside provider, including time for travel to and from a vaccination site. Supervisors should be notified in advance and substitute teachers will be available, as needed.

For more info go to <https://achieve.lausd.net/covidvaccine> or call the Los Angeles Unified COVID testing and vaccination help desk at (213) 241-2700, which is open 6 am to 6 pm Monday-Saturday.

LEFT OUT: Bias in LA Times coverage of school reopening debate

- An analysis of LA Times coverage of the school reopening debate shows that the paper has elevated the voices of wealthier, healthier LAUSD parents over those from communities of color hit hardest by COVID-19. This bias has manufactured a dangerous and inaccurate narrative that most parents support a forced physical return to schools.

The report, [“LEFT OUT: Media Bias Allows Wealthier and Healthier Communities to Set Terms of In-Person Instruction Debate.”](#) was driven by parents with Reclaim Our Schools LA, who raised issues with the biased coverage they were seeing in the media. and asked UTLA to assist with the research.

Key findings:

- 71% of voices quoted in the LA Times stories about the school reopening debate were from the West, Central, and Northwest regions of Los Angeles, while only 29% were from the areas hardest hit by COVID-19: East, Northwest, and South L.A.
- 65% of parents quoted in the LA Times said they want schools to open now, while 35% preferred to open only when it's safe. But a recent Pew Research poll

shows the majority of people of color do not want schools to open until all teachers can be vaccinated.

- LAUSD is 91% students of color and 80% economically disadvantaged. But 58% of voices quoted in the LA Times were from professional/higher income individuals, small business owners, or millionaires. Less than 9% identified as working class or low-income.

The biased media stories create political cover for elected officials like Gov. Gavin Newsom and City Councilman Joe Buscaino, who are among those trying to force schools to open immediately. The fact is that there is a tremendous racial and economic divide on where parents stand on immediate school reopening. Research by USC shows that while 63% of white parents, and 68% of parents with incomes over \$150,000 want some form of in-person learning, the majority of Black, Latinx, and Asian parents support continued remote learning. In LAUSD, the district's parent survey shows that 66% of parents want their children to continue in distance learning due to the tremendous health risks posed by the pandemic.

CTA State Council Expired Term & Minority At-Large Election

- Ballot registration is now available for the CTA State Council Expired Term and Minority At-Large elections. To be eligible to cast a vote in this election, you must be an active UTLA member and register for a ballot using this form no later than Thursday, April 8, 2021.

You will receive an email from Simply Voting providing you with information on how to vote. If you did not receive this email in your inbox, double check your spam/junk folder. Two ballot links will then be sent to you from Simply Voting ; one for CTA State Council Expired Term Representatives and one for a Minority At-Large Representative.

Voting will take place on Wednesday, April 14th, during the Area Meeting, from 4 – 5:30pm only. After 5:30pm, your ballots will no longer generate a vote.

Only submit this form once, as multiple submissions will delay your registration.

[BALLOT REGISTRATION](#)

UTLA calendar

March 10: PACE/Elementary/Secondary meetings

March 13: Parent Townhall

March 17: House of Reps meeting

March 24: Board of Directors meeting