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August 16, 2018

Austin Beutner
Superintendent, LAUSD
333 Beaudry Ave.
Los Angeles CA 90017

Dear Mr. Beutner,

We are responding to the letter you sent yesterday to UTLA President Alex Caputo-Pearl. We are writing this letter jointly because Arlene Inouye is UTLA's bargaining chair and, with the UTLA Bargaining Team, has urged the district to stop refusing to meet with a state-appointed mediator in a timely fashion as required by law.

In response to the mediator proposing multiple dates for August and in contrast to UTLA's willingness to meet for mediation immediately, LAUSD is refusing to participate within a reasonable time frame. This is unacceptable and indefensible.

Two UTLA officers met with you yesterday with one goal: To get you to abide by the bargaining process and schedule timely mediation dates. No outline of an agreement was discussed in that meeting. Nor did you offer a path to a contract settlement, as your letter suggests. Instead, you continued your steadfast unwillingness to send the LAUSD bargaining team, now that we are at impasse, to mediation. Therefore, your availability to "meet anytime" rings hollow.

You have claimed that you cannot schedule mediation for 56 days because you don't want to interfere with the beginning of the school year. Yet yesterday, on the second day of school, you had plenty of time to discuss ways to cut educator healthcare, pensions, and other compensation with a "realignment" plan created by high-priced consultants tied to the privatization movement. One is the firm founded by former Newark Superintendent Cami Anderson, who aggressively imposed failed charter and privatization schemes that ended in school closings and mass firings of teachers. After a community uprising against her disastrous form of leadership, she resigned in disgrace. Anderson now joins your new chief of staff, Rebecca Kockler, who is tightly connected to the privatization of New Orleans schools.



You continue to talk about salary as if it is the only issue we care about in bargaining. While a fair salary increase is essential for attracting educators in response to a growing shortage, our comprehensive bargaining package provides a vital pathway for drawing families into our schools and saving the civic institution of public education.

This includes proposals to: eliminate the contract language (Article 18, Section 1.5) that allows the district to unilaterally increase class sizes every year; increase the number of nurses, counselors, school psychologists, and teacher librarians; expand accountability for charter schools and co-locations; reduce the drain on instructional time from overtesting; increase investments in bilingual education and ethnic studies; empower local school leadership councils to manage school budgets and create school climate and discipline plans; end the mistreatment of early education teachers, adult education teachers, and substitute teachers; and more.

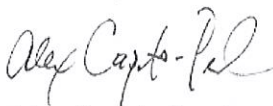
Making vague comments about small salary increases and the need to cut healthcare, while showing no willingness to bargain over our package of proposals, is not a plan to respect educators but a plan to wind down the public school district, the way you wound down so many corporate entities as a private equity profiteer.

At this point in the bargaining process — when the parties are at a deadlock on roughly 23 different issues after more than 17 months and over 130 hours of bargaining — a state-appointed mediator is the best potential path toward reaching an agreement. The California Public Employment Relations Board agrees, by virtue of their certifying our impasse and appointing a mediator.

Enough is enough. You cannot put students first when you put educators last. Your letter suggests we are not looking out for the best interests of our students, which we take great exception to. Mr. Beutner, you have never taught in a classroom, but you should know that our working conditions are our students' learning conditions.

If you can't or won't do this, then educators, parents, and the broader community will question your ability to lead the second-largest school district in the country.

Sincerely,



Alex Caputo-Pearl
UTLA President



Arlene Inouye
UTLA Secretary
Chair, UTLA Bargaining Team