

# Los Angeles Unified School District

## OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

333 S. Beaudry Ave., 24th floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90017  
Phone: (213) 241-6766  
FAX: (213) 241-8952  
www.lausd.net



# News Statement

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CONTACT:**

**Shannon Haber, 213-241-6766**

## **Statement by Superintendent Austin Beutner on the UTLA Contract**

Mayor Garcetti referred last week to this as an historic contract. One contract or one week of negotiations can't solve 40 years of underfunding of public education or decades of frustration felt by educators and all who work in our schools. But I do think we are at an historic moment to start addressing these issues, together with our labor partners. This contract is not the end; it's the beginning.

When I started as Superintendent about six months ago, all of the contracts with our eight labor partners were unsettled. There had been a year of stalemate, further eroding trust between LA Unified and all who work in our schools. Since then contracts with all of the unions have been settled. The same basic principles are embodied in all of them:

- Provide a fair increase in salary, about 6%. Los Angeles is an expensive place to live and it's not easy for any of our employees to make ends meet.
- Improve working conditions and create additional flexibility and resources to serve the needs of students in schools, and
- Live within our means. Los Angeles Unified is facing significant budget challenges and we simply cannot spend money we do not have, even in the face of real unmet needs in our schools.

Specifically, the agreement with UTLA provides for the following:

- A 3% raise for 2017-18 and a 3% raise for 2018-19.
- A commitment to reduce class sizes in all schools with further reductions in highest needs schools.

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- A commitment to address the inequity which exists in our schools. The full funding of the Student Equity Need Index will be an integral part of the 2019-20 budget.
- Additional support for students and educators with more nurses, counselors and librarians in schools. There are nationwide shortages in some of these areas so we'll have to work hard and be creative to find the top talent we want.
- Agreements to work together on a series of areas we all agree could make a difference in schools including green spaces, immigrant rights and other areas. It's also clear we'll need to find other sources of money to do this work as we agreed we cannot use our existing dollars on these areas since those dollars are being spent in classrooms.

All of this is being done within the limits of the existing dollars we have. Every nickel LA Unified has, including the additional support from the County of Los Angeles for nurses and mental health, and the increases in funding in the Governor's proposed budget are going to classrooms. And not more than that because our budget difficulties are very real.

The agreement also reflects a commitment to further reduce class size and add support to schools in future years. All who helped create this agreement—LA Unified, UTLA, the Mayor of Los Angeles and the many families and communities who stood in support of public education these past two weeks—understand the gravity of the commitment they made. The words must become deeds to increase support for public education.

This contract is far from perfect, most are. And I've certainly been made aware of the imperfections as many have called to share their concerns. I guess if everyone is a bit unhappy we might have found the right compromise.

The team at LA Unified worked very hard to avoid a strike because the consequences are very real. Students missed about two million days of education which cannot be made up, families' lives were disrupted, LA Unified lost more than \$100 million which could have been invested in schools and educators lost for more than a week without pay to advocate for what they believe in. But public education is now the topic of conversation in every household in Los Angeles and the communities we serve. Let's build on that support and move forward.

We worked together with UTLA on this resolution. It reflects something we could all live with, and a chance to work together to make it better.

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