

The TORRANCE TEACHER

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1619 CRAVENS AVENUE, TORRANCE, CA 90501 (310) 320-8200 www.torrance teachers.org
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Why Grievances Are Important

Grievances and Other Tools Are An Extension of Site Organizing

In the past few years, TTA members have taken ownership of the TTA/TUSD Collective Bargaining Agreement, commonly called “the contract” or “CBA,” by filing grievances for TUSD infractions against the mutually agreed upon language. Contract ownership and a willingness to know the protections of the contract assist every member of the Association. It provides a mechanism to hold the District accountable when they don’t live up to their side of the bargain.

Some members have expressed disappointment with the process, expressing that they feel like our enforcement is powerless and that TUSD holds all the cards. It is hard to not feel powerless at times, because the power structure is tilted in the administration’s favor. But it is for that very reason that it is vital to enforce the contract whenever and wherever we can. Contract enforcement is a gauge of the District’s conduct. It allows the Association to determine if there is a specific area of continued violation as well as creating a documented record of TUSD behavior. Filing a grievance also puts the District’s interpretation of the contract language into writing, which can be used for future negotiations to clarify and strengthen language to work for both parties.

Filing grievances isn’t just about building a case for potential arbitration either. Most importantly, it is about organizing around our issue and creating pressure on management to work with us to create better working conditions for our members and better learning environments for our students. Through our organizing, we gain power and create parity with administrators. Through setting site or Association goals, we can work collectively to make everyone’s workplace safer and better.

Last year, TTA members filed 11 grievances. The beginning of the school year started with one grievance going to level three (arbitration) and four grievances going to level two. By the end of the year, the remaining grievances were all settled at the informal or level one stage. Fifty percent of last year’s grievances settled during the informal stage. When union members own their contract and enforce it regularly, the number of grievances that settle in the informal stage tends to increase because it forces the District to learn and own the contract too. This year, there has been one grievance filed so far. That grievance was not pursued beyond level 1. There is already a second potential grievance in the works—and possibly others pertaining to the leveling of classes and class sizes (Article XI). The District had until September 11th to level classes and ensure that classes met the class size caps in the CBA. We are now in the 15-day window to file a grievance for violation of this language.

Also, the Association has an ongoing grievance with the District regarding learning center staffing at the elementary level. The Association is in the process of setting up a follow-up meeting pertaining to current staffing to determine next steps in that process. So far, the District has worked in good faith to address issues as they arise, even if the solutions are slow in coming. More information will be coming soon on this grievance.

Ultimately, a grievance is a valuable tool in our labor toolkit. It is one of the few tools available to us as labor to address our needs. Others include lobbying, filing complaints, and filing unfair labor practice charges. The most important course of action is to create an organizing plan with escalating tactics. The better we organize, the more empowered we become. So, use the grievance process as an extension of site organizing to resolve issues. That is how we create a better workspace for us all.

Welcome Back, Site Representatives!



Representative Council Meeting Dates

September 18

October 23

November 20

December 18

January 22

February 19

March 19

April 23

May 21

Quick Hits

Workplace Prevention Plan—As the school year gets underway, it is important to remember to report incidents of workplace violence, even if it is a student acting out against a teacher. The report can be used as an important documentation tool to assist in obtaining changes to student behavior plans to protect all involved, the student, other students in the room, and staff. To find the report, go to the TUSD Portal. On the left-hand side of the page, click on District Files & Forms, then click on Workplace Violence Prevention Plan & Injury and Illness Prevention Program link. The third link down, labeled “Click here to report an incident of workplace violence”, is where you click to report incidents. You can also download a pdf version and fill it out by hand to turn it in to your principal. TTA recommends that you keep copies of all reports for your documentation.

Important Paycheck Updates—There have been several reports of members who worked or took part in PD during the past school year and over the summer who have yet to be paid for their service. It is important to keep reporting these omissions. Several checks, dating as far back as January 2025, had yet to be dispersed without TTA members advocating for themselves and through their site reps. It is also important to note that teachers hired last year (2024-2025) who had more than seven (7) years of service up to fifteen (15) years of service, should have moved to their new step as of July 1. TUSD said they identified six (6) employees who should move steps. Mr. Hernandez, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, said that the movement for those employees should have happened by September 12th and it should be reflected in the November pay warrant (TTA finds this wait egregious, but it has fostered positive dialogue on how to expedite movement in the future). TTA recommends that every member *check your paychecks for accuracy*. The October pay warrant is the first with an ESA on September 20th and the first with health and welfare benefits deducted. We have had several members in the past three years who have had to pay money back to TUSD due to errors made by TUSD or that were owed money by TUSD. Unfortunately, it is necessary to check the accuracy of your pay. If you have questions about the accuracy of your checks, contact the payroll office for guidance and corrections. Here is a link to TTA E-Board member Deb Tabush speaking on the issue at the September Board of Education meeting: [Deb Tabush TUSD BOE 9-8-25](#)

Special Education—Special Education remains a central subject of concern for the Association. TTA leaders are currently working on several issues, including inclusion, workplace violence, staffing, and seemingly arbitrary movement of special educators. The teacher shortage in special education remains tough. TUSD is still hiring for open positions working to address allocation issues, particularly at the elementary level. TTA leadership has also been having conversations with Deanna Sinfield (Assistant Superintendent of Student Services), Julio Hernandez (Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources), and Dr. Tim Stowe (Superintendent) about the constant movement of special educators and their support staff from site to site and the loss of new hires to other districts due to HR processing protocols. TTA leaders are making the case that constant movement creates inconsistencies and undue workload and stress on those that are being moved, and that TUSD needs to rethink its HR onboarding practices to be able to maximize efficiency and compete in filling positions. The Association will continue to work with TUSD to find remedies for these and other issues. Continue to report your special education issues to your site representatives and TTA Executive Board members.

Heat Mitigation—Heat in classrooms throughout September and early October is continuing to cause concern amongst TTA members who are lobbying for safe learning and working conditions. Torrance students and teachers continue to face overheated rooms. Heat mitigation efforts are rolling out. TUSD is taking steps, both long and short term, to mitigate heat as much as possible. Remedies like setting up shade and cooling centers are still in process at some sites. Air conditioning in all rooms at all sites is not considered a viable option. TTA Leaders expressed appreciation for the mitigation efforts as they rolled out citing that any measures are welcome. Remember, per CalOSHA guidelines, *evacuate your students if temperatures in your classrooms exceed 87° F to prevent heat injury*. Work with your site administrator to know where the cooling center(s) are located and how to provide cool-down rest periods for students and staff alike.



FAQs

Understanding ITDPs and Evaluations

Q: What is the difference between Individual Teacher Development Plans (commonly called ITDPs) and Site Goals?

A: ITDPs are part of the evaluation process. Certificated Educators, who are up for evaluation, MAY be required by their site administrator to set two specific individual areas of growth based upon either the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTPs) or state content standards. Per Article VII of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), ITDPs should be developed, with input from the evaluator, by October 15th. The ITDPs also may be modified throughout the evaluation process due to circumstances that change. These goals should be a driver for conversations between the evaluator and the educator. Educators who are not being evaluated should not be asked to provide ITDPs.

Site goals, on the other hand, are outlined in Article XV of the CBA. As part of the “culture of continuous reflection and improvement,” site administrators MAY require up to three annual goals that support District, school site, department/grade level or subject area goals. These goals are NOT part of the evaluation process. These goals are for professional development purposes designed to improve practice and student achievement.

Q: What is the evaluation process?

A: The evaluation process essentially starts October 1st and ends May 1st of each school year. There are several important steps along the way. The timelines are essential for educators and administrators alike to allow for maximum ability to develop growth, assess performance, and improve strengths. The philosophy of the process is to have a constructive experience that allows for educators to continually learn, grow, and become more effective in their professional roles. TTA published a guide for the Evaluation Process. It can be found on the TTA website [HERE](#). The document outlines the process with a checklist, FAQs, and a timeline. The first important date is October 1st, when any TTA unit member being evaluated should be notified that they are up for evaluation and who their evaluator will be. It is important for members to familiarize themselves with the process, especially new hires. If you have any questions or concerns about the process, please contact your site representatives and Executive Board members for assistance.

Candidate Declares for Fall Election

Late last spring, CTA granted TTA a third CTA State Council seat to ensure adequate representation for TTA members with our state affiliate. TTA will hold a special election this fall to elect two State Council representatives and one alternate to CTA State Council. The Elections Committee met over the summer to develop an election timeline.

The lone announced candidate is America Moreno from Yukon Elementary.

The slate will be finalized at the Representative Council meeting on Thursday, September 18th. The election timeline is designed to provide representation to our members for the October State Council meeting.

The CTA State Council seat must be elected through a paper ballot per CTA bylaws. The remaining timeline is listed below.

September 17 - Slate of declared candidates published in *The Torrance Teacher*.

September 18th Rep Council Meeting:

1. Election chair announces slate of declared candidates. Final call for candidate nominations from floor.
2. Nominations closed. Final slate established.

October 1 - The final slate of candidates will be published in *The Torrance Teacher*.

October 6 - The office will deliver ballot boxes and election material to school sites/site reps.

October 7-10 - Election voting window for TTA Executive Board Election.

October 10

- **3:30 PM** - Voting window closes at sites. Ballot boxes or ballot envelope, roster, and any election materials must be dropped off at TTA's office by 5 PM.
- **5 PM** - Election material must be dropped off at the TTA office by 5 PM. Sites who drop off their ballot boxes or envelopes after 5:15 PM on October 10th will be disqualified by the elections committee, and their site's ballots WILL NOT be counted.
- **5:30 PM** - Ballots counted. Candidates notified. Results published in *The Torrance Teacher*.

October 17-19 - CTA State Council Meeting

November 6 - TTA Executive Board Meeting

WHAT IS PROP 50?

The Election Rigging Response Act is a bold response from California to a blatant power grab by Texas Republicans working with the Trump administration to slash funding for public education, healthcare and more to provide tax cuts for billionaires.



You can learn more at: stopelectionrigging.com



TTA WARMLY INVITES MEMBERS TO HAPPY HOUR



LET'S CELEBRATE THE START OF THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR!



3525 W. CARSON ST.
TORRANCE, CA 90503



SEPTEMBER 25TH
4:15PM- 6:00PM



APPETIZERS & A DRINK ON US!* WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

ONE WELL DRINK, BEER, GLASS OF WINE, OR SOFT DRINK

WE KINDLY SUGGEST THAT YOU WEAR BLUE TO SHOW SOLIDARITY WITH TTA.