

# The TORRANCE TEACHER

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1619 CRAVENS AVENUE, TORRANCE, CA 90501 (310) 320-8200 www.torrance teachers.org  
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## Reopeners Ratified

### Members Support Settlement & Getting Back to the Table Quickly

TTA Members voted 89% in favor of ratifying the 2025-2026 Contract Reopener. Members voted last week and the Board of Education approved the agreement this week to retroactively increase salary by 2.23%, increase the health care cap by \$2,000 on July 1, 2026, and provide a \$1,500 off schedule payment to help offset the cost of out-of-pocket benefits expenses. According to Chris Diaz, TUSD Executive Director of Fiscal Services, TTA bargaining unit members should see the salary increase on their January 5<sup>th</sup> pay warrants. Retro checks and the off schedule payment should be available by the end of February. Both checks will be physical, live checks.

The TTA Negotiations Team just wrapped up a series of member-only bargaining forums seeking input from the membership for the upcoming successor campaign. The team plans to present the initial proposal at the January 20<sup>th</sup> Board of Education meeting to kick off the next round of bargaining. The entire contract will be open as the contract expires on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026. TTA Negotiators and Leadership have made it very clear that we are returning quickly to address member issues, particularly out-of-pocket expenses for benefits. TTA leadership set a short-term goal to fight for the individual employee to not have to pay out of pocket for benefits as we seek longer term solutions to the growing healthcare affordability problem. The TTA Executive Board are investigating options to take to the table in the spring as well as to the Insurance Advisory Committee, which next meets on January 20<sup>th</sup>.

Below is the Tellers Report for the contract ratification vote.



#### Teller's Report: TTA Contract Ratification - December 2025

TA (Tentative Agreement)		
Total Members	1,144	
Total Ballots Cast	924	
Signatures	933	
Blank Ballots	6	
Illegal Ballots	3	
Reason(s) for Illegal		More ballots than signatures.
Legal Ballots Cast	915	
Votes Needed to Pass	459	
Yes	814	
No	101	

*Lisa Hamilton*  
Election Committee Chair

*Kim Wing*  
Election Committee Member

*Michele Bloomfield*  
Election Committee Member

*Jessica Guzman*  
Election Committee Member

*Karen Houske*  
Election Committee Member

*Jennifer MacLean*  
Election Committee Member

*Andrea Rice*  
Election Committee Member

*Teri Shimizu*  
Election Committee Member

# Quick Hits

**Prop 55 Extension Campaign:** Site reps are mobilizing at each site to gather signatures for the California Children’s Education and Healthcare Protection Act of 2026 which extends Prop 55 revenues permanently. Voters approved Proposition 30 in 2012 to temporarily increase income tax rates on high-income taxpayers. In 2016, voters approved Proposition 55 to extend these higher rates until 2030. According to the Legislative Analyst’s Office, the top 2 percent of California taxpayers pay these higher rates. Approval of the act does not add new taxes; it extends existing taxes and secures current funding structures that have lifted California’s education system funding from bottom 5 in the nation to 31<sup>st</sup> in the nation. To not extend Prop 55 would be a tax cut for the wealthiest among us while harming students by cutting up to 1 of every 6 teachers in the state. CTA has set a goal of collecting 85% of members’ signatures to place California Children’s Education and Healthcare Protection Act of 2026 on the ballot in November 2026. TTA would need to collect 972 member signatures. Our campaign to collect signatures is underway at the sites. Contact your site representative for more information.

**Labor Alliance:** TTA is working with our local labor partners to build and defend worker power in TUSD. Over the past three years, TTA has worked collaboratively with CSEA 19, CSEA 845, and SEIU 99 to forge an alliance to organize together. The Alliance started coordinating mobilization efforts last February and are currently working to build regular organizing/mobilization strategies and cross-union campaigns. Coupled with TTA President Carlos Anwandter’s site visits, TTA Leadership is focused on organizing for power so that we can be the best we can be for our students and community. The first ask for sites is for everyone to wear their union colors on Thursdays. TTA has long sponsored Unity Blue Thursdays asking for all members to wear TTA blue. Now both CSEA chapters (blue and gold) and SEIU (purple) are joining us in wearing unity colors. If you see a union sibling wearing their colors on Thursdays, show them a sign of recognition—that you see them and stand with them. A simple nod or “nice shirt” is all it takes to show solidarity.

## Teachers Continue to Feel Undertrained & Unsupported on Special Education Issues

TTA leaders continue to work with members on several special education issues, including workload and working environment, workplace violence, and staffing.

TTA members who specialize in special education have adopted several positions since the start of the year, particularly for school psychologists, speech and language pathologists, and the adult transition program. These positions aid TTA leadership and negotiators in fighting for the needs of our educators to best serve all our students.

Safety and staffing continue to be a top priority for TTA. Assistant Superintendent of Student Services Deanna Sinfield ensured TTA leaders that training on de-escalation and how to handle “behavior emergencies” would be forthcoming. The first round of trainings is set to begin soon, then more than likely a “trainer of trainers” model will be implemented moving into the second half of the year. So, while teachers and service providers continue to struggle with how to handle students with aggression and/or attempting to self-injure or injure others, know that training is one the way. TTA leaders believe that training is an urgently needed and imperative step to protect students and educators.

In the interim, continue to report your special education issues to your site representatives and TTA Executive Board members—and attend any or all the Special Education Action Committee meetings. Committee meetings are open to all TTA members.

## FAQs

### Understanding the “Fact-Finding” Process

**Q: What is fact-finding? What does it mean to be the subject of fact-finding?**

**A:** In August, TUSD completed their “TUSD Guide to Employee Accountability.” The guide establishes “uniform procedures for all incidents regarding employee conduct.” It reviews pertinent laws and rights of both the district and employees. TTA has a “just cause” clause in our contract, so just cause is explained. Just cause sets forth established legal and contractual rules that ensure “no employee is disciplined unfairly, arbitrarily, or without solid reasoning,” so the guide explains the seven tests of just cause. The guide then establishes a process for investigations and explains the steps of progressive discipline. Since publishing the guide to administrators in August and employees at the end of October, there has been much confusion surrounding the investigative process—particularly “fact-finding.”

In the guide, fact-finding is a pre-investigation look into allegations of employee misconduct used to determine whether “a full investigation is warranted.” Often this process leads to a case being resolved or closed, averting the need for a full investigation. Fact-finding can also be bypassed if the allegations are determined to be “severe or where evidence could be compromised.” Throughout the process, from notification of fact-finding to the notification of whether the employee will be recommended for investigation or ending the process at that step, everything should be documented and provided in writing to the employee.

The rollout of this new guide and particularly the fact-finding part of the process has been minimal. Administrators received a 50 minute overview in early August with a follow-up email detailing some information. Employees did not even receive a copy until the last week of October, and TUSD has yet to dedicate time to explaining the guide or its processes to employees. TTA will continue to advocate for TUSD to take affirmative actions to train employees on the guide. In the meantime, if you have allegations of misconduct lodged against you, you should receive a written notice of fact-finding inviting you to a meeting. Always bring your union representative with you! Fact-finding is part of TUSD’s investigatory process and should be taken seriously. Do NOT waive your rights to representation!

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**Happy Holidays, TTA Members!**