

# The TORRANCE TEACHER

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## Charting Future Funds

### TUSD Looks for Ways to Increase ADA to Offset Rising Healthcare Costs

In March, Dr. Tim Stowe, Dr. Keith Butler, and Mr. Julio Hernandez reached out to Carlos Anwandter, TTA President to begin discussing ways to “grow the pie” of district funds. The main takeaway from the first two meetings was that the most direct way to increase funds is to increase student enrollment and average daily attendance (ADA).

At the third meeting, TUSD unveiled their idea to start a “dependent” charter school in Torrance using an online curriculum called SORA. During the third meeting, representatives from SORA shared information about their online platform and how it works in private schools, micro schools, and home schools across the country. TUSD then set a fourth meeting on the Friday before Spring Break with several members of the TTA Executive Board to pitch their idea.

On April 14<sup>th</sup>, the TTA E-Board met for a presentation from SORA representatives and to review logistical data from TUSD, including TUSD’s plan to use excess funds from the charter to apply to employee benefits. The E-Board then drafted a policy position regarding the TUSD plan to create an online charter school. The position statement is expected to be reviewed by the TTA Representative Council on Thursday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> after the E-Board votes to send it forward to them or send it back to the E-Board for deeper vetting.

Overall, TTA appreciates that TUSD is seeking creative ways to generate new revenue for our district—particularly their idea to earmark the funds to shore up healthcare benefits. The Association acknowledges the need for action due to declining enrollment and increasing costs. TTA Leaders understand TUSD’s stated purpose of establishing a “dependent” charter school is to bring in current home-schooled (alternative education) students from neighboring communities and counties. With that understanding, TTA Leaders express significant concern with the TUSD’s urgency in establishing this charter school and believe that this urgency seriously jeopardizes the logistical and operational ability to create and establish an effective and appropriate learning environment for students. In other words, TTA is skeptical of the “building the plane as its flying” approach to the situation.

TTA Leaders agree that the curriculum, SORA, is not the issue. Teachers will be able to learn the curricula and implement it. Where SORA, the company, is the issue is that they have offered TUSD exclusivity rights to their curricula for a public charter in California if they set up the charter by September. TUSD’s urgency to secure the SORA curriculum, which is currently in use in several private schools in California, is driving the conversation with the Association. TUSD wants a quick timeline for negotiating a memorandum of understanding and applying for the charter by the July 7<sup>th</sup> deadline. TUSD has said on multiple occasions over the past month of meetings that if TTA is not on board, they will not move forward with the charter.

In light of these considerations, TTA Leaders have put together a list of expectations to be met as a condition of the Associations agreeing to sign off. These expectations regard pedagogy, structures, and systems. Once the position statement is adopted, it will be shared with all members.

In the interim, know that the TTA E-Board have taken this process seriously and are weighing the risk versus to potential return on investment while gauging how much this plan can help versus harm our members. The E-Board voted 9-5 to proceed with collaborating with TUSD if the District will do the necessary work on logistics and operations while ensuring pedagogical best practices. More information will be forthcoming. Watch this space!

## Negotiations: Need, Wants, Luxuries

The TTA Negotiations Team has met with the TUSD Team five times now. The Negotiations Update newsletters and Video Updates continue to be posted on social media and on the website, as well as being sent out via eblast. The key takeaways from the first five sessions are:

1. There continue to be a handful of wins for both sides. Agreed upon items at this point include:
  - a. Three years of calendar (27-28, 28-29, 29-30)
  - b. Updating language in Article II: Recognition
  - c. Creation of a new article that codifies maintenance of agreed upon contract standards
  - d. An MOU expanding the Adult Education salary schedule to 24 steps
  - e. Clarifying and strengthening language ensuring teacher pay for classroom coverage
  - f. Securing a wall between PLC and faculty meetings
  - g. Clean up language on length of work year for each job title
  - h. Elimination of obsolete salary schedule for 185 day TOSAs (this position no longer exists)
  - i. Language clarifying the use of PLC time
  - j. Updating of language on School Site Councils and member representation on SSCs
2. Differences continue to be contentious. While the tone at the table has softened on the District’s side, their language proposals continue to push for TTA to give back previously secured improvements—especially in the area of hours of employment. TUSD’s proposals continue to be about you doing more work with no extra pay for that

work while they do the bare minimum required by law. TTA Leaders and Negotiators are not interested in concessionary bargains.

3. TUSD continues to come to the table underprepared—often not having proposals ready to go and taking long caucuses to do the work that TTA has been expected to do outside of the bargaining sessions. TTA will continue to work hard and bring proposals forward.
4. TTA is working hard to lead by example and create a more collaborative approach to resolving disagreements on language. TTA Negotiators want to understand why TUSD is bringing their issues forward and explaining why we are bringing our issues forward.

Ultimately, TTA Leaders and Negotiators will continue to demand that TUSD make our members’ jobs manageable. Continuing to add to our plates does not serve our students. At some point, TUSD must differentiate between needs, wants, and luxuries—and our members must stand with our leaders in demanding that TUSD stop demanding concessions from the Association to take on more work for no pay.

Some members have been asking about salary proposals. Proposals regarding compensation have not been introduced at the table by either team as of yet. TTA will begin surveying members on April 24<sup>th</sup> for more detailed information from the membership about compensation. This survey will seek information that is different from the November survey. Also, TUSD has maintained that they will not entertain compensation proposals until after the Governor’s Budget Revision (aka “the May Revise”) in mid-May. You will begin to hear more about compensation proposals at that time.

What can you do to support the team? Keep shirting up and showing up! The next school board meeting is Monday, April 20<sup>th</sup>. Wear your TTA Blue every Thursday. Read the Negotiations Updates. And participate in any surveys or member feedback forms TTA sends out. For example, at THS, knowing that Dr. Egan and Dr. Stowe were making visits to their site, many members decided to wear blue to make a silent, visual statement despite it not being a Thursday. At Walteria, the members continue to picket on Thursday mornings and talk with parents about our classroom needs. Several school sites have started sharing their Blue Thursday pictures so we can highlight them in our messaging. Continue to do so. We will celebrate our wins, but we will call out our struggles at the table. You can find our Negotiations Updates [HERE](#).

## TTA Spring Election Initial Candidate Slate Is Set

Fourteen of the 16 TTA Executive Board seats are up for election this spring. The election timeline and declarations of candidacy have been available since early February. The below candidates have declared for TTA Executive Board seats by the March 6<sup>th</sup> deadline. At the April 23<sup>rd</sup> Representative Council meeting, the final slates will be set by taking nominations from the floor. An election will be held for the three executive officer seats, any contested seat, and any seat where the ballot has not been waived by the Rep Council. The election will be held May 12-15<sup>th</sup>. For more election timeline information, visit [HERE](#) on the TTA website. If you are interested in being nominated from the floor for any seat, contact Elections Chair Lisa Hamilton for information at [lisa.hamilton.tta@gmail.com](mailto:lisa.hamilton.tta@gmail.com).

TTA uses the CTA alphabetical order for elections. The CTA alphabetical order for 2025-2026 shall be:

**P V Q K H C N Y W E M B R Z O X F S L U G D J T I A**

In the event that the last name of more than one candidate begins with the same letter or more than one candidate has the same last name, the CTA alphabetical order shall continue to be applied throughout the name, including the first name.

Officers	Candidate(s)
President	Carlos Anwandter (Torrance High)
Vice President	Amy Irwin (Bert Lynn Middle School)
Treasurer	Dena Ludwig (Jefferson Middle School)
North High Director	Isabelle Martinez
South High Director	VACANT
Torrance High Director	Ken Johnston
West High Director	Mark Pesusich
Middle School Directors (two elected at-large)	Maribeth Borowski Shawna Leader
Central Area Elementary Director	Amanda Leyland
North Area Elementary Director	America Moreno
South Area Elementary Director	VACANT
West Area Elementary Director	VACANT
At-Large Director	Patricia Jackson

## Quick Hits

**The Standard Disability Insurance Special Enrollment Opportunity:** The Standard, CTA’s recommended Disability and Life Insurance company, is hosting a special enrollment opportunity for TTA members. Between March 15- May 15, 2026, TTA members can sign up for The Standard with no health questions asked if the minimum number of participants enroll (46 members are needed). The Standard’s CTA endorsed Disability insurance replaces up to 80% of your pay if you are unable to work due to illness, injury, pregnancy, or childbirth. They provide coverage for disabilities that occur on and off the job and have additional benefits for student loans, cancer, and summer. If you don’t know whether you have disability insurance, you

can check on your pay warrant or call the TUSD benefits office. You would either have American Fidelity or The Standard or neither. You should not have both as you can only have one disability insurer.

**Employee Discipline:** Do not let your guard down. Several TTA members have waived their rights to union representation in a process that is covered by the contract and in a published district guide. TUSD has had a hard time following their own guidelines. This leaves members not knowing what to expect or how to handle the situation—and in some instances not even knowing there are allegations against them while meeting with administrators. Remember that you have a right to union representation at any meeting you feel could negatively impact your personal working conditions. You can stop a meeting and request a union representative at any point in time during a meeting that heads in that direction. [HERE](#) is TTA’s Member Toolkit for Understanding the Disciplinary Process and [HERE](#) is TUSD’s Accountability Guide.

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 OFFERS ARE GOOD UNTIL JUNE 30, 2026

**MAY 13<sup>TH</sup>, 2026**  
**DAY OF THE TEACHER**  
**KEEGAN'S**  
**SPORTS LOUNGE & GRILL**  
**APPETIZERS & A DRINK ON US!\***  
**WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!**  
 1434 MARCELINA AVENUE,  
 TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA 90501,  
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**4:00-6:00PM**  
 \*ONE WELL DRINK, BEER, GLASS OF WINE, OR SOFT DRINK\*



**Last Chance!**  
**Special Enrollment Opportunity**  
**for TTA Members ends May 15, 2026**

Torrance Teachers Association has partnered with Standard Insurance Company to bring you a special enrollment opportunity to make it easy for you to apply for CTA-endorsed Disability and Life insurance **without answering health questions.\***

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Learn more and apply at [standard.com/cta/torrance](https://standard.com/cta/torrance).

\* No health questions asked if 5% of eligible chapter members apply for Disability insurance and/or when applying for up to the Guarantee Issue amount of Life insurance.

For costs and further details of the coverage, including exclusions, any reductions or limitations and the terms under which the policies may be continued in force, please contact Standard Insurance Company at 800.522.0406. Standard Insurance Company, 1100 SW Sixth Avenue, Portland, OR 97204 GP190-LTD/S399/CTA.1 GP190-LIFE/S399/CTA.3 SI 16480-CTAvol (2/26)

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