

# The TORRANCE TEACHER

Published by TORRANCE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION CTA / NEA  
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 May 27, 2026

## Negotiations Look to Stopgap Measures Health Costs Continue to Soar

In March, Dr. Tim Stowe, Dr. Keith Butler, and Julio Hernandez reached out to TTA leadership to share ideas for addressing the need to “grow the budget pie.” This outreach quickly turned into a plan for TUSD to apply to open a “dependent” charter school. TTA leadership listened, asked questions, and took multiple split votes, but in the end has cautiously moved to support TUSD in this endeavor. TTA and TUSD met May 13<sup>th</sup> to negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) ensuring that the charter certificated employees would be recognized as TTA unit members and fall under the TTA contract. The MOU also dedicated \$10.1 million in one-time funds to backfill the health plan subsidy. This stopgap measure is intended to provide some level of relief while TTA and TUSD continue to incrementally negotiate a higher health benefit cap per employee.

In the interim, TUSD released the unsubsidized health rates for the 2026-2027 plan year—and the rates continue to give sticker shock, particularly the EPO plan. The rates below are the actual premium renewal rates with no subsidy applied. The EPO rates reflect a 14.6% increase over this year’s rates, while Kaiser shows a 7.6% increase.

2026-27 Tenthly Fringe Amount w/o Subsidy

MEDICAL	10/1/26-9/30/27 Renewal Rate	CSEA 845	TTA	CSEA 19	Local 99	Conf/Bd	Unrep
		\$ 1,048.00	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 1,059.00	\$ 1,100.00	\$ 1,088.00	\$ 1,098.00
<b>EPO Actives</b>	<b>Tenthly</b>	NET COST					
Employee	\$1,510.04	\$ 490.15	\$ 288.15	\$ 479.15	\$ 438.15	\$ 450.15	\$ 440.15
Employee + Spouse	\$3,020.10	\$ 2,028.33	\$ 1,826.33	\$ 2,017.33	\$ 1,976.33	\$ 1,988.33	\$ 1,978.33
Employee + Child(ren)	\$2,870.67	\$ 1,876.12	\$ 1,674.12	\$ 1,865.12	\$ 1,824.12	\$ 1,836.12	\$ 1,826.12
Employee + Family	\$4,528.80	\$ 3,565.12	\$ 3,363.12	\$ 3,554.12	\$ 3,513.12	\$ 3,525.12	\$ 3,515.12
<b>EPO Retirees &gt;65</b>	<b>Monthly</b>						
Employee	\$969.24						
Employee + Spouse	\$1,938.47						
Employee + Child(ren)	\$1,841.53						
Employee + Family	\$2,905.07						
<b>Kaiser Traditional HMO</b>	<b>Tenthly</b>	NET COST					
Employee	\$1,078.08	\$ 30.08	\$ -	\$ 19.08	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Employee + Spouse	\$2,156.16	\$ 1,108.16	\$ 906.16	\$ 1,097.16	\$ 1,056.16	\$ 1,068.16	\$ 1,058.16
Employee + Child(ren)	\$2,048.35	\$ 1,000.35	\$ 798.35	\$ 989.35	\$ 948.35	\$ 960.35	\$ 950.35
Employee + Family	\$3,234.24	\$ 2,186.24	\$ 1,984.24	\$ 2,175.24	\$ 2,134.24	\$ 2,146.24	\$ 2,136.24
<b>Kaiser DHMO</b>	<b>Tenthly</b>	NET COST					
Employee	\$862.30	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Employee + Spouse	\$1,724.60	\$ 676.60	\$ 474.60	\$ 665.60	\$ 624.60	\$ 636.60	\$ 626.60
Employee + Child(ren)	\$1,638.37	\$ 590.37	\$ 388.37	\$ 579.37	\$ 538.37	\$ 550.37	\$ 540.37
Employee + Family	\$2,586.90	\$ 1,538.90	\$ 1,336.90	\$ 1,527.90	\$ 1,486.90	\$ 1,498.90	\$ 1,488.90
<b>Kaiser Retirees &lt;65</b>	<b>Monthly</b>						
Employee	\$1,488.73						
Employee + Spouse	\$2,977.46						
Employee + Child(ren)	\$2,828.58						
Employee + Family	\$4,466.19						

Keep in mind that this premium does NOT include dental or vision, both of which will remain the same as last year (\$106.40 and \$25 monthly respectively). Using the net cost numbers provided above with the rates for dental and vision, the individual will be paying \$419.55 out of pocket next year for the EPO if no subsidy is applied. The family costs continue to increase at staggering rates further squeezing TUSD employees and negating raises before they are even negotiated.

TUSD knew this would be an issue for all of us. Hence, they brought forward the “dependent” charter idea to hopefully increase enrollment and funds from the state. The TUSD Board of Education adopted the MOU at their May 18<sup>th</sup> meeting securing rights for certificated staff working at the charter as well as providing a \$200 monthly subsidy for the next three years to apply to health premiums. **The net effect of the subsidy backfill is that the out of pocket expense will be \$219.55 instead of \$419.55 for the individual on the EPO for the 2026-2027 plan year.** TUSD should be publishing rates soon.

TTA leaders do not believe that holding costs even, despite a \$4,000 dollar infusion (\$2,000 cap increase negotiated last October and \$2,000 in subsidy annually), is good enough. The Negotiations Team put forward an idea to provide immediate relief, but the proposal was met with resistance from TUSD. The inability to reach a settlement for compensation to ensure relief for the start of 2026-2027 school year fell apart with TUSD’s insistence that covering the individual AND providing a large share of COLA to salary was not doable. The TTA Negotiations Team will continue to fight for the maximum to be applied to compensation—and that TUSD reinvest in classrooms, not consultants. The next school board meeting is scheduled for June 15<sup>th</sup>. The budget and LCAP will be adopted at a special meeting on June 16<sup>th</sup>.

# Member Survey Shows Diverse Work & Compensation Concerns

TTA Members participated in a compensation survey to help provide guidance to the TTA Negotiations Team at the bargaining table. Over 65% of members participated in the survey, which was held April 23<sup>rd</sup>-May 8<sup>th</sup>. The results are below.

**Q1** 750 responses

Assuming that current projections for Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) hold at 8.81% over the next three years, and assuming that 100% of COLA is applied to Total Compensation (Salary + Benefits), how would you prefer COLA be applied over those three years? (Note that these options are NOT an indication of what we will be proposing at the table. Your answer will help the team understand how to proceed regarding total compensation.)

Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
2.81% to Salary + 6 % to Benefits	1.73%	13
4.81% to Salary + 4% to Benefits	18.27%	137
6.81% to Salary + 2% to Benefits	24.40%	183
Full 8.81% to Benefits	2.80%	21
Full 8.81% to Salary	52.80%	396
<b>Total</b>		750

**Q2** 776 responses

TTA is advocating for TUSD to restore its historic practice of allocating at least 65% of its budget directly into the classroom. This includes compensation for educators who work with students every day. However, it is true that TUSD’s resources are limited, so every dollar that is used for salary can impact other areas of the budget and can affect our members in negative ways. With that in mind, for each statement below, indicate whether you Strongly Agree, Agree, are Neutral, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree.

Answer Choices	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
I am willing to get a smaller raise (less-thanCOLA) in exchange for better working conditions. (See Question 3 below for examples.)	6.91% 53	18.12% 139	18.77% 144	27.77% 213	28.42% 218	767
We need to get better-than-COLA for salary, even if it means that TUSD will go into receivership (state control) and/or will be forced into layoffs.	16.47% 126	16.34% 125	24.18% 185	27.58% 211	15.42% 118	765
I am willing to get a smaller raise (less-thanCOLA) in order to ensure that every individual employee’s health care is covered.	11.93% 92	26.98% 208	24.51% 189	20.49% 158	16.08% 124	771
We need to get better-than-COLA for salary, even if it means impeding working conditions (i.e. larger class sizes, less professional autonomy, fewer resources).	15.38% 118	14.08% 108	18.25% 140	37.03% 284	15.25% 117	767
We need to get better-than-COLA on salary, even if it means changing health plans or other reductions in health coverage.	10.13% 78	14.16% 109	24.03% 185	35.97% 277	15.71% 121	770

Q3 761 responses

Which of the following improvements in working conditions would you be willing to negotiate in exchange for a smaller (less-than-COLA) salary increase? (Check all that apply.)

Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
Smaller class size (1-2 students less per class. Note that a reduction of one student costs approximately 1% in salary.)	25.62%	195
More prep and planning time	20.50%	156
Fewer meetings (PLC, PD, Faculty Meetings)	27.60%	210
More support for student behavior in the classroom (paraeducators, aides, other service providers, more training)	31.01%	236
More autonomy in the classroom	8.41%	64
A stronger voice in how my school is run (collaborative vs top-down management)	11.04%	84
More mental health and behavioral support for students	16.69%	127
Stipends for exceeding contractual requirements (for example \$100/month when you have an extra student in your class)	28.38%	216
None of these. I am not willing to concede higher compensation for any issues with working conditions	35.61%	271

Q4 743 responses

What are you willing to do to support the Negotiations Team in achieving these goals? Check all that apply.

Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
Wear blue on Thursdays	87.75%	652
Write letters/emails to the School Board	37.42%	278
Speak at a School Board meeting to tell about my experience as a TUSD educator	9.69%	72
Attend a School Board meeting	55.72%	414
Speak to community members (especially PTA) about TTA's issues	20.19%	150
Help recruit community members (especially parents) to speak/write to the School Board	13.32%	99
Help recruit community members (especially parents) to speak/write to the School Board	13.32%	99
Picket outside my school before and after school	42.26%	314
Participate in a coordinated work action (i.e. work-to-rule)	39.97%	297
Vote YES on a strike vote (even though I'm not able to strike right now)	38.63%	287
Vote YES on a strike vote (and participate in a strike)	51.68%	384

# TTA Spring Election: Complete Results

Office	Elected Candidates
President	Carlos Anwandter (Torrance High School)
Vice President	Amy Irwin (Bert Lynn Middle School)
Treasurer	Dena Ludwig (Jefferson Middle School)
North High Director	Isabelle Martinez
South High Director	Sara Aloteibi
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
At-Large Director	Patricia Jackson

Two seats remain vacant: South Area Elementary Director and West Area Elementary Director. A special election will be held in the fall for those two seats.

## Quick Hits

**Your Voice Is Your Power**  
Come to Any or All Scheduled Meetings

**TTA President's Forum:** The in-person President's Forums have been canceled due to impacted scheduling. Look for a video version of the Forum, which is coming soon. The **topics of interest** are listed here in the Quick Hits section as well. If you have comments, concerns, or issues, the new video version will provide you with instructions to submit them.

### Topics of Interest

**Adjunct Duty:** Now is the time to have conversations about next year's adjunct duty at your sites. Article VI. L. 5. States that "an opportunity **will** be provided prior to the end of the school year to involve the unit members in the **identification, design, and implementation of the adjunct duty needs** of the schools site for the upcoming year" (emphasis added).

**School Site Councils:** Remember that School Site Councils (SSC), by law, are elected annually and require a minimum number of participants from legally defined stakeholders. All SSC should be posting agendas and minutes to all stakeholders as well. The role of the SSC is to provide oversight over School Plans for Student Achievement (commonly called SPSAs). Teachers have a distinct role on SSCs—and service on SSCs count as adjunct duty. If you think your site's SSC is not following protocols for elections or reporting, reach out to the TTA office. TTA leaders will work with you and your site to ensure proper representation and reporting.

**Department Chair Elections:** High School Department Chair elections should be underway. Per the contract, the elections must be completed by May 31<sup>st</sup>. If not, then the principal has the right to declare the seat vacant and appoint a chair. Every member of the department, even members on leave, have the right to vote in the election. For more information, visit the TTA website under the Collective Bargaining > Contracts tab to find the [Job Description and process](#).

**Voluntary Transfers & Tentative Assignments:** It's the time of year when tentative assignments for next fall are starting to come out. Per the contract, tentative assignments must be provided before the end of the school year. The CBA also outlines the protocols for changes to those tentative assignments over the summer. This is also the prime time for permanent unit members seeking to move school sites to place their name on the district's voluntary transfer list. The contract provides that unit members be granted an interview for any open position for which they are credentialed to teach. The contractual rules for tentative assignments and voluntary transfers are found in Article IX of the contract. You will also want to ensure that TUSD has up-to-date contact information for you in the event they need to contact you over the summer regarding your tentative assignment for the 26-27 school year.

**Contract Renewal:** In the last few weeks of the school year, you will be notified that your contract for next year is in NeoGov for you to sign. If you are a probationary or permanent teacher, this is a formality, but you should double check that your step and column is correct on the contract. If it is not, then you will need to work with HR to correct it to ensure that you are not over or underpaid moving forward.