

UPDATE

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Mayoral control is bad for our schools

UTLA has a better alternative:

UTLA thanks Antonio Villaraigosa for raising the issue of education higher than any previous mayor in Los Angeles. Our members know better than anyone how urgently our schools need improvement. We look forward to working closely with Mayor Villaraigosa to fix what's wrong with LAUSD so that all students can succeed.

UTLA, however, opposes the Mayor's proposal for LAUSD governance. In March, the House of Representatives—our policy-making body of more than 300 elected members—passed a motion unanimously opposing mayoral takeover. You may find the following points useful when explaining UTLA's position:

The proposed takeover is undemocratic.

► **Mayor Villaraigosa wants to bypass the voters and go straight to the legislature for approval.** The Mayor's plan tries to change the City Charter without a vote of the people, in violation of the California Constitution. If this plan is so strong, why not let the public vote on it?

► **The Mayor's plan would weaken the democratically elected School Board.** The Mayor wants to strip the Board of its policy-making role, further disenfranchising the parents and community members who elect them. We need to strengthen the board, not weaken it.

► **Takeover would create an all-powerful Superintendent.** Most UTLA members feel the Superintendent already has too much power over LAUSD classrooms. We would have a harder time negotiating decent contracts with the Superintendent.

Also consider:

The plan would give even more non-educators power over schools. The Mayor's plan would create a "Council of Mayors" to help oversee the LAUSD. That means people who have no experience or expertise in education would make even more decisions.

The Mayor wants to create more charter schools. During his April 18 State of the City speech, the Mayor proposed to significantly increase the number of charter schools. That would further reduce ADA funds for the District, resulting in less money for teacher pay, class-size reduction, and other

crucial needs. And most charter schools deny union rights for teachers and classified employees. Also, a recent RAND study shows that charter schools do not outperform public schools.

Mayoral control simply doesn't work. There is no evidence that mayoral control has had an appreciable positive effect on student achievement in any city where it has been tried. We need instead to empower school-site councils of teachers, parents, and all other stakeholders.

Our Plan to Reform the LAUSD

UTLA has been working with community allies to draft a plan that speaks directly to the causes of low student achievement. The coalition's Call to Action for Equity and Excellence in L.A. Public Schools is built on the following elements:

1. Democratic District governance and school-site control.
2. Quality instruction through expanded peer assistance and teacher-driven professional development.
3. A rigorous, diverse, and engaging student-centered curriculum to prepare students for higher education and a career.
4. Adequate funding for all schools, and additional resources for schools in greatest need.
5. Support for the health and welfare of our students, their families, and communities.

You can read the full text of the reform plan, along with UTLA's contract proposals, in the May 12 UNITED TEACHER and online at www.utla.net.

What Can You Do?

The takeover bill is first being considered in the Assembly. Contact your Assembly Member (see the flipside for how) and urge him or her to support authentic reform, not mayoral control. Contact Speaker of the Assembly Fabian Nuñez at:

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