



CHICAGO TEACHERS UNION

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VIA Electronic Mail

Mayor Lori Lightfoot
City of Chicago
121 N. LaSalle Street, 5th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60602

Affiliations
American Federation of
Teachers, Illinois
Federation of Teachers,
American Federation of
Labor – Congress of
Industrial Organizations,
Illinois Federation of Labor
– Congress of Industrial
Organizations, and Chicago
Federation of Labor,
Industrial Union Council

Re: CTU Assistance with Covid-19 Vaccination Campaign for CPS Students and Families

Dear Mayor Lightfoot:

This letter concerns the CTU's desire to be a partner in assisting the City of Chicago and Chicago Public Schools in efforts to vaccinate age-eligible CPS students and family members. As you are aware, earlier this month CTU and CPS finalized an Addendum to our February Memorandum of Agreement on the Resumption of In-person Learning. Amongst other things, the Addendum calls for CPS to coordinate with CTU and the Chicago Department of Public Health to develop strategies for a CPS student and family vaccination program and to provide specific blocks of appointments on a weekly basis. To that end, this week, we met with representatives from CDPH and CPS.

At the meeting, CTU proposed a series of concrete steps, both immediate and for the coming weeks and months, through which CTU, CPS, and CDPH could leverage our members' relationships with students and families, and public schools' roles as community anchors, to get CPS school community members vaccinated as quickly as possible. We are deeply concerned, and frankly confused, by the resistance CPS showed in response. The CTU's recommendations for coordination include the following:

- 1) Pursuant to the Addendum to the MOA, immediately provide specific blocks of appoints for age-eligible CPS students and families.
- 2) Set a shared goal of vaccinating no less than 80% of age-eligible CPS students and family members by August, and report progress toward that goal on a weekly basis.
- 3) Schedule at least 10 collaborative vaccine events geared toward age-eligible CPS students and families between now and the end of June.
- 4) Connect with schools in the Sustainable Community Schools program that house social service programs and partner with community organizations, schools near existing vaccine sites, and schools that house health clinics, to set up vaccine events targeted at age-eligible CPS students and families.
- 5) Have CPS pay for buses for parent and student vaccine field trips, and coordinate with our members and community partners to fill the seats.

Rather than true collaboration on strategies such as those above, it appears CPS is only interested in sharing lists of vaccination sites and asking our members to amplify them. While such amplification is a necessary part of a vaccination strategy, you and CDPH know well it is insufficient by itself. Only 42% of age-eligible Chicagoans have received one vaccine dose, and only 29% are fully vaccinated. Through Chicago and across the country, vaccine supply is now outpacing demand. Many vaccination sites no longer require appointments and are accepting walk-ins. For the City and CPS to reach their vaccination goals, which is critical for the health, safety, and vibrancy of our school communities as we look toward next school year, we need to be more creative ambassadors for public health.

We see, and applaud, that the City and CDPH appear to be recognizing the need for creativity at this stage in the vaccination campaign. We cannot help but notice stories in the press about the City and CDPH exploring ideas such as partnerships with barber shops and nail salons, and “vax pass” concerts and events to increase vaccination levels. We are confused, however, by the cold shoulder our 25,000 members—who are trusted figures in communities across the City, including many of those where vaccination rates are lagging—are getting in response to their offers of help. Our members will be an incredible asset to the City in its vaccination campaign efforts, if only they are given a real opportunity to do so. We urge you to direct CDPH and CPS to give them that chance.

Sincerely yours,



Jesse Sharkey
President

JS:THG:yv

cc: Janice Jackson, CPS CEO
Chicago Board of Education Members