



CHICAGO TEACHERS UNION

August 4, 2021

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

Dr. Jose Torres
Interim Chief Executive Officer
Chicago Public Schools
42 West Madison Street
Chicago, Illinois 60602

Mr. Maurice Swinney
Interim Chief Education Officer
Chicago Public Schools
42 West Madison Street
Chicago, Illinois 60602

Mr. Miguel del Valle
President
Chicago Board of Education
1 N. Dearborn St., #950
Chicago, IL 60602

Members of the Chicago Board of Education
Chicago Board of Education
1 N. Dearborn St., #950
Chicago, IL 60602

Chicago Public Schools Bargaining Team
Chicago Public Schools
42 West Madison Street
Chicago, IL 60602

Dear Mayor Lightfoot, Dr. Torres, Mr. Swinney, President del Valle, Board of Education Members and CPS Bargaining Team:

As we prepare for the start of the 2021-2022 school year, it is imperative that we acknowledge the changing dynamics of the COVID-19 virus and the importance of engagement with Chicago Public Schools families and communities. Since presenting our comprehensive proposal to Dr. Torres and the Chicago Board of Education on July 8, 2021, Chicago Teachers Union officers, counsel and rank-and-file educators have held a series of bargaining sessions with senior CPS management and legal representatives. We have made incremental progress, but with less than 30 days until the August 30, 2021, return to classes for our students, we must ensure that all stakeholders in our district are clear on plans and proposals for maximum safety in the upcoming year.

Jesse Sharkey
President

Stacy Davis Gates
Vice President

Christel Williams-Hayes
Recording Secretary

Maria Moreno
Financial Secretary

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

To that end, we are inviting members of the CPS bargaining team, CPS leadership and the Chicago Board of Education to participate in an open bargaining session with Union educators and representatives on August 11, 2021. Chicago public school educators and families have long desired transparency in the negotiation process — well before the COVID-19 pandemic — and our Union believes that an open bargaining session is essential to improving trust between our district and the community it serves. This is especially important as new pandemic variants pose immediate threats to the health of all Chicagoans, but especially our unvaccinated student population.

Parents are concerned, and they deserve assurances that our Union and the CPS team are working in lockstep to ensure safety in hundreds of school buildings across the city. For the past year, our Union has been consistent in our call for layered mitigations to keep educators, students and all families safe. While we applaud Gov. J.B. Pritzker for his leadership regarding today's forthcoming statewide mask mandate, which CPS has already adopted, our school communities need more than masking to ensure safety — especially as we continue to learn about the Delta variant. Also needed are:

- Ventilation upgrades
- A COVID-19 testing plan for vaccinated and unvaccinated members of our school communities
- Maintenance of criteria and health metrics based on COVID prevalence to pause in-person instruction
- Full-time contact tracers, nurses, social workers and counselors in every school building
- A comprehensive home visit program to engage students and families in every school community

Mayor Lightfoot, there is \$4 billion in federal funding that you have to invest in our schools and communities — a once-in-a-generation opportunity to provide all of our students with the staff and services they deserve. Open bargaining will provide Chicago families insight into how the CPS budget will directly impact their children and schools, where we stand in negotiations today, and the gaps that must be closed before the fall return.

Merely surviving the COVID-19 pandemic is not enough. Chicago Public Schools needs to earn the trust and confidence of families across the city, and by joining our Union team for open bargaining, we can reach that goal together.

Please let us know as soon as possible if you are accepting of this invitation, and we look forward to continued negotiations regarding the safety and long-term success of our students and their families.

Sincerely,



Jesse Sharkey
President

JS:RR:yv