

Dear Families, Staff, and Supporters:

We hope that you and your families are enjoying the holiday season and looking forward to a well-deserved winter break.

We continue to meet every day with our partners at the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU), working in good faith towards an agreement. You can view previous negotiation updates and a wealth of information on our District's [labor updates page](#); we will continue to keep families updated throughout the bargaining process.

From the start of these negotiations, CPS has remained true to our values, working toward a contract that:

- Rewards our talented educators
- Reflects the values, goals, and strategies in our [five-year strategic plan](#)
- Is responsible with the District's funding, and
- Provides a rigorous, joyful, and equitable daily learning experience for our students.

We share the CTU's goal in getting an agreement done as quickly as possible. To that end, we appreciate the recent movement that the union has shown on the most high-cost items in the contract, scaling back proposals on salary raises and extra staffing. However, given that CPS is facing structural deficits for the foreseeable future, there is still work to be done to ensure the eventual contract is affordable both in the short and long term. Finally, we remain committed to an instructional vision aligned with our strategic plan that protects student instructional time, high-quality, culturally-responsive curriculum, meaningful teacher assessments, and principal autonomy and accountability.

Additional Staffing

In our previous update, we let you know that we have made progress due to the new roadmap presented to us by CTU, which decreases the union's original staffing request. The latest CTU proposal now calls for 5,000 new employees to be hired gradually over four years, at a total cost of \$1.3 billion.

CPS responded in writing with a counter-proposal aligned to the priorities outlined in our strategic plan. CPS' proposal prioritizes protecting the [more than 7,000 school-based staff](#) that we have added to our ranks since 2019, including thousands of additional teachers and paraprofessionals, and hundreds of additional nurses, social workers, counselors, case managers, and restorative justice coordinators, all of whom have played a critical role in CPS students leading the nation in academic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our proposal also prioritizes additional staffing and resources for our highest-need groups — especially our students with disabilities and our English learners. Specifics of our staffing proposal include:

- Adjusting the student-to-teacher ratio for **English Language Program Teachers (ELPT)** to account for the growth of English Learner students
- Adjusting the ratio of **case managers** to students to better support our students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
- Three **centrally-funded elective/holistic teacher positions** for every elementary and middle school, regardless of size
- More **arts teachers** specifically assigned to serve multiple small schools
- **Teacher assistants** in every Pre-K classroom, every Kindergarten classroom with 23 or more students, and a pool of thirty bilingual Teacher Assistant positions to support English Learners
- A **social worker** in every school, regardless of size
- A **counselor** in every school, with more counselors for larger schools and schools that score highly on the District's Opportunity Index. (The Opportunity Index measures the socio-economic conditions in each school community and helps CPS allocate resources in a more equitable way).
- Additional flexibility for schools to hire **librarians**, and a CPS partnership with local universities to upskill 40 existing educators per year to earn the Illinois library media endorsement.
- Phasing out the District's reliance on vendors for technology support services coordinators, and instead hiring and assigning two **technology coordinators** to each of the District's 17 networks for next year, and scaling up to four technology coordinators per network by the end of the agreement.

These represent the most recent proposals and counter proposals submitted in writing; we are continuing to bargain with CTU on additional staffing.

Salary Increases

As we mentioned in our previous communication, CTU's roadmap also revised the union's proposals on raises from a 9 percent cost of living adjustment every year to a 6 percent cost of living adjustment in the first two years of the agreement, and a 5 percent cost of living adjustment in the final two years.

CPS has maintained its current proposal of 4 percent raises in the first year and 4 - 5 percent raises in the next three years depending on inflation; this is in line with our recent agreement with SEIU Local 73, and other recent public sector collective bargaining agreements.

In addition to cost of living adjustments, teachers will continue to receive regular “step” increases in pay based on seniority.

Under CPS’ proposal, teachers could receive a four-year pay increase of up to 32 percent. CPS’ proposal would ensure our teachers remain the most highly-compensated large-city public school educators in the country, except for a few categories where New York City teachers are more highly compensated. [Click here](#) for examples of how CPS’ proposed salary increases would impact certain teachers based on seniority.

Athletics

We are continuing to find key areas of agreement with CTU as we move through the negotiation process — most recently around student athletics. Recognizing that athletic programming is an important part of a well-rounded student experience, CPS has proposed a nearly \$21 million investment in athletic programs, more than tripling what was provided for athletics in the last contract. Specifics include:

- **An athletic director in every large CPS high school**
- **Increasing stipends for coaches by an average of more than 50 percent** so that we can retain top talent and ensure our student athletes benefit from strong leadership
- \$10 million to fund **sports equipment, uniforms, supplies, athletic trainers and transportation**

Student Learning Experience

We are continuing to negotiate on all areas of the contract to ensure it aligns with the academic vision in our strategic plan. To support a rigorous, joyful, and equitable daily learning experience for our students, CPS remains committed to:

- Protecting **students’ instructional time**;
- Maintaining **strong teacher evaluation systems**;
- Providing all students with a **high-quality, culturally-responsive curriculum**; and
- Ensuring **autonomy and accountability for principals** to set the instructional vision and maintain the day-to-day operations of their schools.

For more detail on these areas, please view our previous communication [here](#).

As a system, Chicago Public Schools remains deeply committed to ensuring that all students experience holistic, robust, culturally-responsive curriculum and instruction, and that their identity is valued, celebrated and incorporated into their learning. This is why we have enacted policies to ensure that every teacher implements standards-aligned, culturally-responsive curriculum, and to protect the free and respectful discourse around ideas within the classroom. CPS’ [guidelines](#) around curriculum reflect many [State laws and guidelines](#) that protect important subject areas like Black history, Native American history, Asian American history, disability rights

history, civics, holocaust/genocide education, women in history, character education, media literacy, violence prevention and conflict resolution, and LGBTQ+-inclusive instruction. These policies — which exist outside of any labor agreement — can help protect the District from federal or state limitations on our academic freedoms, book bans or limitations and restrictions on our curriculum. The District will continue efforts to ensure every student has a more inclusive understanding of literature, history, and the impact of traditionally marginalized populations.

Thank you for your attention and engagement on this important work. We continue to work in good faith towards an agreement that rewards our tremendous educators for the work they do, ensures the District's ongoing financial health, supports our District's five-year plan, and serves our overall mission to provide every student with a high-quality education that prepares them for success in college, career, and civic life.

Sincerely,

Pedro Martinez
Chief Executive Officer
Chicago Public Schools

Bogdana Chkoumbova
Chief Education Officer
Chicago Public Schools