



Jean-Claude Brizard
Chief Executive Officer

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Dear Teachers and School Staff:

As you know, providing every Chicago Public School student with a longer school day that includes 90 minutes of additional instructional time is a top priority that I share with Mayor Emanuel. Adding 90 minutes of instructional time to students' days will allow for more reading, math, science and enrichment programs like art, music and physical education, all of which will help boost student achievement at their schools. It will also provide you with more time to plan and collaborate as a group.

Many teachers and principals are fully on board. They have told me of the need for additional time with their students in the classroom and have indicated their willingness to do it this year. So far, nine schools have opted into the Longer School Day Pioneer Program and roughly 2500 students will benefit from the longer school day this year. That is great news – and I hear every day from CPS parents who are delighted when their school opts for longer school days.

Unfortunately, a great deal of confusion and misinformation surround the program, and it's time to clear the air of rumors. There are two types of falsehoods swirling about the Pioneer Program: who is allowed to vote on waivers and what exactly are teachers waiving when they vote yes.

Regarding who is eligible to vote on a waiver, that's simple: anyone who is part of the CTU bargaining unit. That means teachers, school clerks, school assistants, teachers' assistants, instructor assistants and other teaching assistants with a variety of titles. In each vote, your Union delegate controls the process. Your delegate can contact the CTU at any time to verify eligibility. Your union delegate also certifies the vote upon completion. There have been some honest mistakes in the process to date – but all of them have happened under the watchful eyes of your delegates.

There are rumors on both sides about threats and intimidation. I urge anyone who feels that discussions about the merits of the longer day have crossed the line into hostility – or if you are contacted in an inappropriate time or place – to please report the incident immediately to your principal, the CTU and CPS.

The other major area of misinformation concerns the waiver itself. Teachers have expressed concern about what they are waiving when they vote yes for a longer day. Here are the facts:


The waiver adopts a new school day in which teachers (not PSRPs) are scheduled to be on-site for 40 additional minutes, but have 45 minutes of lunch and 70 minutes of preparation time per day. The standard longer school day schedule that most schools are using for teachers is 7:50 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The standard longer school day schedule for students is 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and enables students to have a 45-minute lunch/recess period and 390 minutes of instruction. The waiver provides teachers with a lump sum payment for that time instead of other additional compensation.

That's all it does. The waiver vote does NOT mean that teachers will not be eligible for afterschool pay if they work in afterschool programs that begin after the 3:30 p.m. dismissal time. It does NOT waive compensation (such as NBCT stipends or other stipends) other than for the additional 40 minutes of on-site time. It does NOT affect the pay or work schedules of PSRPs and it does NOT affect your membership in the union, your membership in the CTU collective bargaining unit or your collective bargaining rights.

But you don't have to take our word on this. CPS is willing to spell out, in as much detail as teachers need, exactly which rights will NOT be waived in each vote. We've lengthened the ballot for two schools already to help allay your concerns and are perfectly happy to spell out as much details as teachers need to be comfortable in their support.

Adding 90 minutes of instructional time to students' days is important. But it's also important that we discuss this issue honestly and respectfully.

Sincerely,



Jean-Claude Brizard
Chief Executive Officer