

Dear CPS Families,

As we return from spring break, I have some encouraging news to share!

As of today, CPS and our partners at the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) have reached a Tentative Agreement around a four-year labor contract for our teachers. You can find details below on what that contract will look like, and on the steps that must be taken for this agreement to move from “tentative” to “final”.

First, though, I want to offer my most heartfelt thanks to the members of our CPS bargaining team. These dedicated professionals have spent close to a year negotiating in good faith, responding to more than 700 initial proposals and countless counter proposals to get us to this point. This team has worked nights, weekends, and holidays, sacrificing time with their loved ones to go above and beyond for our students and staff. I applaud them for all the ways they prioritized the needs of our students, stayed true to our District’s values, and uplifted CPS’ vision for a rigorous, joyful, and equitable daily learning experience for every child.

### **Our Tentative Agreement**

Outlined below are the major components of the Tentative Agreement between CPS and CTU. This agreement fairly rewards the excellent work of our educators, while always keeping the best interest of our students at the forefront. It also makes investments that are financially responsible for the District, and avoids a disruptive work stoppage that would have created serious hardship for our families.

Highlights:

- **Cost-of-Living-Adjustment (COLA):** In August of 2024, CPS proposed a COLA (or pay raise) of 4% in the first year of the contract, and 4 to 5% in the contract’s remaining three years, depending on inflation.
  - This is an increase of .5 percent above last year’s COLA of 3.5 percent, and it’s in line with other collective bargaining agreements with city workers, including our most recent contract with SEIU.
  - I’m proud that we were able to provide [the largest annual raises for CPS educators in over 13 years](#) without additional borrowing and without putting the District into unsustainable financial distress.
- **Increased Pay for Veteran Teachers and Paraprofessionals.** An additional \$30 million in pay increases over four years to help ensure students continue to benefit from the talent and expertise of our longest serving educators.
- **Expanded Health Benefits.** A significant expansion of medical and dental benefits for all CPS employees, with no increase to healthcare contributions for staff earning less than \$90,000 per year.

- **Additional Staffing.** We anticipate that the agreement will increase staffing from current levels by several hundred positions over 4 years, with most of these additional staff serving our highest-need populations like our English Learners and students with disabilities. The final total of additional staff will be dependent on District and school-level enrollment and need, but they will include additional English Language Program Teachers (ELPTs), case workers, teacher assistants (including bilingual TAs), technology coordinators, arts teachers, nurses, social workers, librarians, and others.
- **Class Size.** Reduced class sizes, particularly in the younger grades, that will allow our students to receive more individual attention from their teachers.
- **More Planning Time for Elementary School Teachers.** We were able to increase planning time for teachers from 330 minutes per week to 350 minutes per week while preserving student instructional time — this was a major priority for the District. Schools will be able to repurpose professional development time to give teachers more time for prep.
- **Revised Practices for Teacher Evaluation.** Our students deserve excellent teachers every day in every classroom, and regular performance reviews are one of our most important tools to make this a reality. While this agreement will allow the highest-performing teachers to be evaluated once every three years, it largely preserves principals' ability to provide regular and meaningful evaluations to their staff. But evaluations are not just about holding teachers accountable — it's about getting them the support that they need to grow and develop, which is why this agreement also outlines additional training and support to help all teachers reach a high standard.

Some additional elements of the new contract include:

- Tripling the amount of funding for athletic staff, programs, equipment, and transportation
- Maintaining our commitment to a teacher assistant in every general education Pre-k classroom
- Full-time, network-based fine arts positions to serve schools that have a vacant art position
- Adding 50 Sustainable Community Schools over four years, which partner with community-based organizations to provide wraparound services to students.

### **Next Steps**

Now that all outstanding issues have been resolved, both sides have to ratify the contract. After the CTU completes their ratification process, I will present the Tentative Agreement to the Chicago Board of Education for their approval. Once approved, the final step will be for the Board to pass an amendment to this year's budget to fund the first year of the contract.

As we near the end of this journey, I find I am feeling proud. Proud of everyone who worked so diligently for nearly a year to negotiate this contract. Proud that our teams were able to find common ground on the issues that are most important to our educators, and that we succeeded in keeping the best interests of our students at the center. Most of all, I am proud that we can now move forward, uniting around the critically-important issues facing our District, including appealing to our federal, state, and city lawmakers for more equitable funding and fully implementing our District's new [five-year strategic plan](#).

I thank you for your patience and partnership throughout these negotiations and look forward to working together to finalize this agreement and finish the school year strong.

Sincerely,

Pedro Martinez  
Chief Executive Officer  
Chicago Public Schools