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For Immediate Release

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Video of Friday Morning Press Conference:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1E9FsAcTN4lmmuu_KSNH7ar38u9-ev_NR/view?usp=sharing

**'WE SHOULD ONLY BE WORKING ONE JOB': CPS EMPLOYS SOME OF THE LOWEST PAID WORKERS IN
THE CITY**

NO MEETINGS. NO DEAL.
**7,500+ CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS STAFF REPRESENTED BY SEIU
LOCAL 73 ON STRIKE FOR 2ND DAY.**

While there have been discussions, there have been no official bargaining meetings since Wednesday and management has not made any substantial changes to their proposals.

CHICAGO-For the second day, more than 7,500 Chicago Public Schools staff with SEIU Local 73, including special education classroom assistants (SECAs), bus aides, custodians, and security officers, from over 500 public schools, were on strike. Workers joined teachers with the Chicago Teachers Unions at the picket lines across the city and then rallied at City Hall in the afternoon. This is the first time in history that Chicago Public Schools staff and teachers are on strike together. Public school staff have been working without a contract since June 30, 2018.

SEIU Local 73 and the Chicago Board of Education have not had an official bargaining session since Wednesday. While there have been some discussions between SEIU officers and the Board, management has not made any substantial changes to their proposals. The city's current proposal does not create good jobs in the schools' halls or give students, especially special education students, the schools they deserve.

CPS support staff remain resolute in their demands, eager to go back to work, and hopeful that bargaining will continue.

Jeffrey Howard, Executive Vice President of SEIU Local 73, and dozens of workers from Jones College Prep High School held a press conference Friday morning.

"I hate the fact that we are on strike," said Greg Lee, a security officer who works at Jones said. "We want to be providing our kids the education they deserve. My message to the City of Chicago and Board of Education is this: give us the resources we are asking for. We just want a decent wage to be able to afford to work in the city that we live in."

"Educators are the backbone of Chicago. We believe education extends not just into the classroom but at the start of a child's day when a bus aide gets them onto a school bus and gets

them prepared for the day ahead. Before children even arrive for class our security officers are already providing security safety. Our Special Education Classroom Assistants (SECAs) make sure that ALL children get the same quality education as every other child in this City. It has never been more important that these jobs become good jobs and are sustainable for families," said Howard.

Chicago Public Schools employs some of the lowest-paid workers in the city. Mayor Lori Lightfoot herself stated that SEIU Local 73 school support staff are "[chronically underpaid](#)." Most are low-wage workers living paycheck to paycheck, with many -- especially bus aides -- working second or third jobs to make ends meet. Over half of CPS support staff make less than \$35,360.

According to data provided by CPS, **average 2019 salaries for support staff are:**

Bus Aides: \$15,759

Security Officers: \$34,427

Custodians: \$34,491

SECA : \$36,333

For Cook County, the Department of Housing and Urban Development [defines low income](#) for a two-person household as \$57,050 annually and very low income as \$35,650 annually. Over 70% of bus aides, security officers, and SECAs are performed by women of color.

"We should only be working one job. All we're asking for is a fair contract so that we can provide for own families so that we can educate other people's children," said Citlali Soto, a security officer.

"If the city can give away billions to develop condos, if the Chicago Police Department pays out \$33 million in legal settlements, then why can't the Board of Education provide us the resources that we need to educate our kids?" said Lee.

SEIU Local 73 members are also demanding clean and safe schools and the proper resources for special education students. SECAs must stop being pulled into random assignments so their special education students can receive the care and instruction they deserve; CPS must stop giving millions of dollars to Sodexo and Aramark while custodians struggle.

While Mayor Lightfoot and city leaders claim that the city is strapped for cash and can't meet the needs of Chicago Public School staff., the city continues to pour millions into private contractors Sodexo and Aramark for facilities management and custodial services. Since 2014, CPS has given Sodexo \$244,350,538 and Aramark \$443,745,483, despite [multiple reports and audits that have found that these companies are leaving schools dirty](#). The hundreds of millions of dollars spent on these companies can be better spent elsewhere in the schools.

The strike is just the latest example of working people of different races and from different places joining together to take action for higher wages and good jobs, taking on employers like

GM, Kaiser, Stop and Shop and McDonald's. Across the nation, workers are demanding that the 2020 presidential candidates have plans to help millions of workers join together in unions to bargain across employers for higher wages, better jobs and a brighter future for our families.

Several Democratic presidential candidates have tweeted their support for the CPS staff and teachers strike.

Barring any last-minute developments, CPS support staff represented by SEIU Local 73 will continue to strike on Monday.

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SEIU Local 73 represents more than 29,000 workers, primarily in public service and publicly funded positions in school districts, municipalities, social service agencies, and many other job classifications in Illinois and Indiana. SEIU Local 73 represents 7,500 Chicago Public School staff. For more information please visit the SEIU LOCAL 73 website at www.seiu73.org