

For Immediate Release

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*Copy of the letter sent to Mayor Lightfoot available upon request

Mayor Lightfoot: 'We invite you to personally meet us at the bargaining table'

SEIU STRIKE DAY 6: President of SEIU Local 73 sends letter to Mayor Lightfoot Inviting Her to Come to the Bargaining Table

CHICAGO- The SEIU Local 73 rank and file bargaining team representing 7,500 Chicago Public Schools staff held a press conference this morning to talk about the status of bargaining and the letter Dian Palmer, President of SEIU Local 73, sent to Mayor Lightfoot inviting her to come to the bargaining and "stay at the table until a fair agreement is reached."

"Our negotiations began 17 months ago, our contract expired 15 months ago, we've done everything possible to attempt to reach an agreement before there was a strike," said Larry Alcott, Lead Negotiator for SEIU Local 73. "Since the strike began, we scheduled a bargaining session last Monday, which lasted for 12 minutes...management walked out of the room and did not return after making no proposals or offering no new ideas."

"We are making a request to the Mayor to come into the room with us, stay in the room with us, and roll up our sleeves together and see if we can't work through the remaining issues that are open on the table."

CPS support staff remain resolute in their contract demands. **The current sticking points include:** pay increases for staff that create a pathway out of poverty pay and make-up raises that were taken away by CPS in the past, improved pay for special education classroom assistants (SECAs) that reflects their work and responsibilities, enforcement of SECAs' duties and responsibilities so they are not pulled away from their special education students, an end to using Sodexo and Aramark to manage the work of custodians, and addressing the lack of benefits such as paid days during Christmas break.

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. Public school staff have been working without a contract since June 30, 2018.

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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