



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Eric Bailey, ebailey@seiu73.org

SEIU Local 73 Statement on American Federation of Teachers Proposal to Reopen Schools

Chicago, IL – “We applaud AFT President Randi Weingarten’s call to fully reopen schools in the fall in a safe manner,” said Dian Palmer, President of SEIU Local 73. “However, we recognize that in order to do this safely and responsibly, it will take all stakeholders. Teachers and educational staff, parents and public officials, and school district administrators.”

“Our union represents Special Education Classroom Assistants (SECA), custodians, para professionals, school clerks, security officers, bus drivers, bus aides, and parent workers all across Illinois and Northwest Indiana. While many of our school-based members have been vaccinated against the COVID virus, we continue to see many of our Black and Brown communities with a lower vaccination rates driven by mistrust of the vaccines long term effect. In order to reopen schools fully we must educate, provide easy access to the vaccine and rebuild trust in our communities. This will only happen when we work together and involve all the stakeholders in the conversations.”

“Proper staffing levels are critical to reopening schools. The funds in the American Recovery Plan can help to ensure the staffing needed to make fully reopening schools in the fall a success. Again, this will only work when all stakeholders are involved in the conversation.”

“We look forward to working with the school districts we represent and our members to ensure schools fully reopen safely for students, staff, and their communities”

###

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. We are dedicated to improving the lives of workers and their families.