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School Layoffs, Facilities Management Boondoggle Show CPS is Heading in the Wrong Direction

Chicago, IL – SEIU Local 73 condemns Chicago Public Schools (CPS) plan to lay off 443 school staff and educators including special education classroom assistants, security officers, and aides.

“These layoffs show that CPS is heading in the wrong direction,” said Dian Palmer, President of SEIU Local 73. “After more than a year of dealing with the struggle to provide students, specifically special needs students, with the education they deserve during a pandemic, CPS responds by eliminating front-line educational staff. The fact this is happening when the district is receiving nearly \$2 billion in federal support to resolve the impact COVID had on education is a slap in the face to these students and their families.”

To add insult to injury, CPS announced it is outsourcing facilities management to Jones Lang LaSalle in a three-year, \$375 million contract.

“CPS continues to ignore everyone that works within the school system and knows the schools,” said Palmer. “Never once have they asked the custodians SEIU represents what it will take to keep our schools clean and safe for our students. And yet, they had no qualms about spending more than \$700 million on Aramark and Sodexo and their failed facilities management.”

“These companies would routinely fail to provide our members with the cleaning supplies they needed, forcing them to bring supplies from home to keep the schools clean and prevent being disciplined,” said Science Meles, Executive Vice President. “Spending more than a billion dollars of taxpayers’ money on privatization only to have unclean and unsafe schools is the very definition of a boondoggle. The real question is where do CPS’s and Mayor Lightfoot’s priorities lie? With the students or with private corporations.”

SEIU Local 73 will continue to fight against the layoffs and privatization of facility management to ensure our children have clean and safe schools and quality education in Chicago.

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SEIU Local 73 represents more than 10,000 workers in Chicago Public Schools, and 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.