



**FOR PLANNING PURPOSES**

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## **Decatur School District #61 Custodians Authorize Strike**

**Chicago, IL** – Decatur SD #61 Custodians have voted to authorize a strike. SEIU Local 73 represents 80 custodians who have been bargaining since February while the board has claimed workers are overpaid compared to neighboring districts like Kankakee.

“The leaders of this school district have a history of disrespecting these essential workers,” **said Joseph Richert, SEIU Local 73 Secretary-Treasurer.** “The custodians kept the schools safe and clean throughout the pandemic. They deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. They deserve to be paid a living wage for their work.”

According to the MIT Living Wage Calculator, custodians with one child are currently underpaid by \$13.23 an hour. Health insurance cost increases will only increase the wage gap for these essential workers.

“The district has an opportunity to bargain in good faith and resolve this contract so we can be ready for the start of the school year,” **said Amanda Francis, Chief Steward and Custodian of six years.** “The choice is theirs. We are prepared to strike if they do not take negotiations seriously.”

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*SEIU Local 73 represents more than 35,000 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.*