SEIU LOCAL 73

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July 27, 2026

Dr. Macquline King, Chief Executive Officer
Chicago Public Schools
42 W. Madison Street
Chicago, IL 60602

RE: Demand for TIF Surplus Data and Immediate Revision of the CPS Proposed Budget to Prevent Worker Furloughs

Dear Dr. King,

On behalf of the more than 16,500 essential school workers represented by SEIU Local 73 — the special education classroom assistants, bus aides and monitors, custodians, security officers, crossing guards, parent workers, and miscellaneous workers who keep Chicago's public schools running every single day — I am writing to demand full transparency and immediate action on the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Proposed Budget's treatment of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) surplus funds.

1. Full Disclosure of the Data Behind the $200 Million Figure

The CPS Proposed Budget assumes $200 million in TIF surplus funds. Our members, our union, and the taxpayers of Chicago deserve to see the underlying data, assumptions, and methodology the Board of Education used to arrive at this number. We are formally requesting that CPS immediately provide:

- All financial models, worksheets, and projections used to calculate the $200 million TIF surplus estimate
- Communications between CPS, the Mayor's Office, and the Chicago Department of Planning and Development regarding TIF surplus declarations
- Historical TIF surplus data for the past five fiscal years, including actual surplus amounts declared versus budgeted
- Any documentation showing why the district did not pursue a higher surplus declaration

Without this data, the public has no way to verify whether this number reflects genuine fiscal caution or a manufactured shortfall used to justify cuts on the backs of the lowest-paid workers in our schools.

2. $200 Million Is Not Enough — CPS Must Secure $285 Million

Based on our own analysis of citywide TIF district balances and prior-year surplus declarations, SEIU Local 73 asserts that $200 million is a deliberately conservative lowball figure. The City of Chicago's TIF districts are sitting on far more capacity than this budget acknowledges. We are calling on CPS to pursue a minimum of $285 million in TIF surplus funds — an additional $85 million above the current proposal.

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This is not a marginal ask. This $85 million gap is the difference between a budget that protects our members and their students, and one that forces furlough days onto the backs of workers who are already stretched thin and underpaid. **CPS cannot claim there is "no money" while leaving tens of millions of dollars sitting unclaimed in TIF districts across this city.**

3. Formal Demand: Revise the Proposed Budget

SEIU Local 73 formally demands that the CPS Proposed Budget be revised to include no less than $85 million in additional TIF surplus revenue, with the explicit purpose of eliminating any and all proposed furlough days for CPS support staff. Furlough days are not a "shared sacrifice" — they are unpaid days forced onto workers who are already among the lowest-paid employees in the district, many of whom are Black and Brown women supporting their own families on poverty-level wages.

4. SEIU Local 73 Will Take This Fight to the Mayor and City Council

Let us be clear: SEIU Local 73 stands ready to mobilize our members and allies in partnership with CPS and the Board of Education to push Mayor Brandon Johnson and the Chicago City Council directly for the additional TIF surplus declaration our schools need. We intend to hold City Hall and the State of Illinois accountable for full funding of education, and we will not accept a budget that balances itself on the backs of school support staff while TIF dollars sit idle and the state has failed to fully fund public schools.

Our Position Is Simple:

- **The money exists.** CPS has not made the case that it doesn't.
- **Furloughs are a choice, not a necessity.** A $85 million gap is closeable.
- **Workers will not be an afterthought.** Every day a paraprofessional or bus aide goes unpaid because of a budget shortfall is a day CPS chose austerity over its own students and staff.
- **We are not asking. We are demanding.** Show us the data, find the $85 million, and take furlough days off the table — now.

We request a written response, along with the requested TIF data, no later than July 28, 2026. SEIU Local 73 remains ready to meet with CPS leadership at any time to discuss a path forward that protects our members and the students they serve.

Chicago's students deserve fully staffed classrooms. Chicago's school workers deserve full paychecks. There is no excuse for CPS to accept less when the money is sitting right there in the city's TIF districts.

In solidarity and in struggle,

Dian Palmer
President, SEIU Local 73

cc: CPS Board of Education