



STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Chicago Teachers Union responds to new, vague school budgets that continue to hurt students and cripple public education

CHICAGO—Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) Vice President Jesse Sharkey released the following statement in response to the school district’s release of new school budgets:

“While we are glad that 40 percent of the student-based budgeting (SBB) is off the table, school budgets are still lower than last year. Unacceptable school-level cuts continue, and to be clear, these fiscal decisions hurt our students. A short-term fix from Springfield cannot resolve the long-term damage done to Chicago Public Schools (CPS) by the Chicago Board of Education and Mayor Rahm Emanuel. Simply put, our schools need sustainable, progressive revenue.

“We’ve had year after year of reductions in support personnel to schools, and ‘efficiencies’ that principals have tried to wring out of their schools. There have been hundreds of millions in cuts that CPS claims are ‘away from the classroom,’ but that have cut essential programming from transportation, counseling, after-school programs and even school libraries. Meanwhile, CPS has continued its decades-long practice of furthering segregation by funneling capital funds (long-term debt) towards expanding selective enrollment buildings while neglecting the ‘under-enrolled’ neighborhood schools in their shadow.

“Today’s vague SBB plan offers no details on how these new ‘efficiencies’ will be wrung out from ‘schedules.’ More importantly, there is no mention of any city effort beyond the state-authorized, state-implemented property tax—an authorization that returns us to the funding structure that existed prior to 1995.

“CPS states it’s faced an ‘agonizing’ choice, although the choice is actually a legal requirement resulting from its own fiscal irresponsibility and unwillingness to raise revenue on those who can afford it. The real choice is the one that the CTU has posed repeatedly—choosing to raise revenue from the wealthy to make our schools whole and move towards the schools Chicago’s students deserve, and not cede to the status quo of relegating urban public education to under-funding and worsening segregation.

“TIFs and a corporate head tax will resolve the budget gap completely and result in no cuts to our classrooms. Mayor Emanuel, CPS CEP Forrest Claypool and their wealthy friends and developers should pay their fair share instead of paying lip service to teachers, students and parents.”

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The Chicago Teachers Union represents nearly 27,000 teachers and educational support personnel working in the Chicago Public Schools, and by extension, the more than 400,000 students and families they serve. The CTU is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers and the Illinois Federation of Teachers and is the third largest teachers local in the United States and the largest local union in Illinois. For more information please visit CTU’s website at www.ctunet.com.

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