**CTU Releases Transformational Contract Demands for City Chicago’s Students Deserve**

by **ctu communications**  |  **03/27/2015**

**CHICAGO**—Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) President Karen GJ Lewis, NBCT, will lead 50 teachers and education support personnel into contract negotiations with the Chicago Board of Education today, in which the Union will present its proposals for a new Collective Bargaining Agreement (contract). Many of the proposals are designed to vastly improve the academic and social/emotional supports for Chicago’s most underserved students, who rely on the city’s public schools to improve their life opportunities. The current CTU/Chicago Board of Education contract expires June 30, 2015.

“Our new contract will reflect our values as educators, and the stake we have—and our city should have—in the education of the children we serve,” President Lewis said. “There is absolutely no greater interest for our members than the lives of their students, and we look forward to honest, transparent conversations with the Board on how to strengthen the district and provide adequate resources for all of its students, their families and the city our students deserve.”

Throughout negotiations, the CTU will be strongly advocating for the services and supports needed by all CPS schools. Among the contract demands the CTU proposes are:

1. Establish lower and compulsory class size limits in all schools.
2. Ensure that every school has: the necessary clinicians and a school counselor and nurse; a truant officer, restorative justice coordinator, librarian and playground instructors; and art, music, physical education and other teachers to create robust and effective educational programs.
3. Restore adequate preparation time and enforce paperwork limits for teachers.
4. Dedicate resources previously committed to Teach for America to the Grow Your Own Program instead to develop a more diverse and local teaching force directly from CPS student graduates.
5. Engage in legal action against big banks to retrieve upwards of $1 billion for our classrooms; end contracts with these same financial institutions that refuse to renegotiate excessive fees and penalties.
6. Return diverted revenues from the tax increment financing (TIF) program to the schools.
7. Place a freeze on charter school expansion, school closings and turnarounds; allow for union rights for teachers at charter schools and legislative advocacy for an elected school board.
8. Expanded pre-kindergarten (Pre-K) for parents at 300% of the Federal Poverty Level.
9. Reduce significantly the number and duration of standardized tests; prohibit tests entirely for students in Pre-K through 2nd grade.
10. Establish 50 sustainable community schools and strive for policies to achieve increasing integration of students and increased access to curriculum which reflects the experiences and identities of our students.

In the CTU’s recent research report, “A Just Chicago: Fighting for the City our Students Deserve,” the Union argued that the families of Chicago students deserve adequate pay and permanent jobs; freedom from judicial inequities; stable, affordable and appropriate housing; better access to whole health care; equitably-funded, high-quality education; and political action to equalize opportunity. To that end, the demands presented to the Board will reflect this vision.

“Teachers and PSRPs are demanding the schools our students deserve, a commitment to public education and real actions to address the social crisis so many of our students in their communities face, so we demand that Chicago’s leaders treat our children as the priority—not the bankers and stock-traders who fund their campaigns,” said CTU Vice President Jesse Sharkey. “If we are to be accountable to the needs of our children, we will have to hold the wealthy accountable for the massive investments that our schools deserve.”