

Hello ChiArts Family,

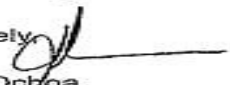
As you may know, ChiArts is currently in negotiations with the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) to establish the first four year contract between the union and ChiArts. We wanted to take a moment to let you know that we are truly proud of what we have established at ChiArts, and our school is being recognized not only throughout Chicagoland, but throughout the country. ChiArts' model is unique and impactful! We created it specifically for the students of Chicago. This is why many students and teachers choose ChiArts versus a typical CPS high school.

Please know that we value our students, parents, teachers and all of the individuals who assist us in fulfilling our mission. Our effort to negotiate a fair and just contract with CTU is currently one of our priorities. We believe it is important to share pertinent information so that those who may not be directly involved in the negotiations are aware of specific facts regarding ChiArts:

- Under our current financial structure, ChiArts has become one of the most successful arts schools in the country within 10 years. Last year 100% of our seniors graduated high school. Annually, between 95% and 100% of our students are accepted into a college or university, and 65% of our students go on to study the arts or work in an arts-related field immediately after high school.
- There are 175 employees at ChiArts. ChiArts academic teachers union represents 43 employees (approximately 25% of our workforce). It is important to consider how negotiation demands will impact all of ChiArts employees including the counselors, art teachers, arts department heads, staff in the front office, admissions, marketing, finance, and development.
- ChiArts receives a pre-approved, finite amount of money from CPS each year to fund its academic program. Our allocated funding is comparatively less than funding levels received by CPS Charter Schools. The rate per student varies annually, and CPS deducts a 3% administrative fee from the total CPS funds provided to ChiArts.
- ChiArts uses all CPS funds to support the academic program, and the vast majority of this money goes towards academic teacher salaries.
- As required by CPS, ChiArts has enough cash on hand to maintain three months of operations. We do not have any other investments. According to the National Council on Nonprofits, and the NonProfit Quarterly publication, while there are varying approaches to cash reserves, it is a standard practice of many organizations of our size to operate with four to six months of cash on hand.
- Currently, the academic teachers' work schedule is 7:30 AM to 3 PM. They teach between 8 AM and 1 PM. ChiArts teachers have the fewest direct instructional minutes of all Chicago Public high schools.
- Academic teachers have eight weeks off for the summer and also have 13 additional days off during the school year via paid holidays. In addition, academic teachers receive up to 10 days of paid sick time, four personal days and two paid professional development days each school year. Academic teachers also have both a winter and spring break. This is a total of up to 84 days off per school year.
- Academic teachers are eligible for full benefits which include medical, dental, vision, and paid time off (PTO). ChiArts also offers one medical coverage plan wherein ChiArts pays 100% of the academic teachers' monthly premiums on behalf of the teachers. This results in \$0 being deducted for medical coverage on bi-weekly paydays.
- Currently, the teaching field is very competitive in Chicago. In this environment, teachers have more employment options and some simply choose to explore those options. ChiArts' turnover rate is similar to CPS' turnover rate, despite the fact that CPS has a higher pay rate. According to an article in *The Chicago Reporter*, "on average, the year-over-year turnover rate in CPS is 18 percent." ChiArts' turnover rate from 2010-2017 was 20%. Currently, nearly half of our academic teachers/paras or 21 of our 43 academic employees, are on their 5th year or more with ChiArts.
- ChiArts solely fundraises for our arts programming expenses. Each year, the ChiArts' volunteer-led Board of Directors and Executive Director must raise \$3,500,000.00 in donations and grant funds to specifically pay for the arts classes, arts programming, and staff to support fundraising for the program. ChiArts is required to allocate money to the arts program, as intended by the donor. These funds cannot be used to meet academic teachers' demands. Significant increases in expenses would challenge the sustainability of our arts program.
- Many of our donors give specific restrictions on which departments, items or activities can be funded using their donation--this is a common nonprofit donor behavior. All solicitation efforts are communicated with the intent to support and sustain tuition-free arts training at ChiArts. We are required to follow the intent of the donors.
- Given the success of ChiArts, we are committed to maintaining our current structure, as ChiArts will not exist without both our academic and arts programs.

We want to assure you that we are working diligently, and are focused on negotiating a fair contract that protects both the academic and arts programs. We are dedicated to ensuring the vitality and sustainability of ChiArts for all of our students and employees. Please feel free to contact me with any questions that you may have. We thank you for joining us in our mission here at ChiArts, and please know that we are committed to maintaining the high standards that have already been established. We thank you for your support.

Sincerely,


José Ochoa
Executive Director