

April 30, 2019

Dear ChiArts Families,

As you know, since last May, ChiArts has been negotiating with the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU), the union that represents our 42 academic teachers, to reach a fair multiyear contract that supports both the educational quality and the financial sustainability of our unique, performing arts-focused contract school. In sum, we have met more than 25 times, including 3 sessions conducted with the support of an independent federal mediator and another scheduled for May 1, at the same time as CTU's scheduled rally to announce a strike.

Tonight, in our ongoing commitment to reach an agreement and avoid a strike before the CTU's imposed deadline of 5:00 p.m. tomorrow, Chi Arts and the CTU met today for over 7 hours trying to reach an agreement so our students and families aren't disrupted by a strike.

During tonight's negotiations, the ChiArts Board presented a substantial new offer that provides an 8.46% average salary increase to our academic teachers this year and an overall increase over the life of the five-year contract of at least 24%. This proposal will bring our academic teachers to 92% salary parity with their CPS counterparts by 2022-2023. This financial offer is possible only through the Board's agreement to use approximately \$400,000 in reserve funds to support these salary increases, while also making adjustments to reduce our administrative staffing and expenses.

The comprehensive ChiArts proposal presented tonight also addressed the more than 30 outstanding "work rules" items being negotiated with the teachers' union. Here, too, we have made significant efforts to resolve items that are important to our academic teachers and that benefit our school community. These include:

- CTU asked for limits on special education teacher caseloads. We agreed.
- CTU asked for a non-discrimination clause in the agreement. We agreed.
- CTU asked for an acknowledgement that ChiArts is a Sanctuary School. We agreed.

While the ChiArts Board recognizes that dipping into our savings and using deficit spending to fund salary increases is not sustainable over the long-term, we believe it is the right solution for us now to prevent a strike and to keep our students and teachers where they should be—in the classrooms, teaching and learning.

We will continue to provide updates on the progress of negotiations via email and on our website. You will be alerted via our automated phone system if there are any significant new developments and when we successfully reach a contract agreement.

José Ochoa
Executive and Artistic Director