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**KIDS FIRST
CHICAGO**

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Statement from Kids First Chicago on Passage of City of Chicago Budget

Kids First Chicago applauds Mayor Johnson and the City Council for approving a City budget that keeps Chicago Public Schools (CPS) solvent this school year. By delivering the largest TIF surplus in the City's history, the budget ensures CPS can secure the \$379 million it planned for and avoid cutting classrooms or taking on more short-term debt.

At the same time, it is important to be clear about the tradeoffs. While CPS is receiving the TIF revenue it needs—and potentially more—the district is also sending \$175 million back to the City for a pension payment it is not legally obligated to make. That \$175 million could otherwise support students directly: expanding special education services, stabilizing school budgets, or strengthening academic and social-emotional supports.

CPS has limited, constrained ways to raise revenue of its own. As a result, the district should not be expected to support City obligations in ways that undermine its financial stability. Any future cost-sharing must be tied to a sustainable, recurring revenue source that does not come at the expense of classrooms.

As CPS moves toward a fully elected, independent school board in January 2027, the ongoing fiscal entanglements between the district and the City must be resolved. Families cannot afford uncertainty that stretches halfway into the school year or forces last-minute, short-sighted fixes.

CPS families deserve greater transparency and a shared commitment from the City and the State to put CPS on a stable financial path that centers kids first.

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ABOUT KIDS FIRST CHICAGO

Kids First Chicago's mission is to dramatically improve education for Chicago's children by ensuring their families are the respected authorities on what their kids need and decision-makers in their kids' education. Kids First Chicago (K1C) partners with families to support them in gaining the resources, access, and voice they need to achieve their vision for their children. K1C provides transparent and rigorous education analysis to families, educators, and policymakers alike to inform data-driven and inclusive decision-making about the future of Chicago's public schools. Visit kidsfirstchicago.org.