



## PRESS RELEASE

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# CPS Engineers, Principals and Teachers Union Question IFM Expansion

*Coalition Calls for Transparency and Cost Savings*

**CHICAGO**—(January 24, 2017) For the second time in seven months, the leadership of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Operating Engineers, Principals Association and Teachers Union held a press conference to question the rationale for Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and his hand-picked Board of Education to approve contracts with two controversial vendors. The Integrated Facilities Management Program (IFM) has been criticized over the lack of transparency, cost analysis and detailed explanation that costs an estimated \$108 million for only 175 schools.

The two controversial vendors, SodexoMagic, LLC and Aramark Management Services, have both been participating in a pilot program that has included cost overruns and complaints of “filthy” conditions pervasive in the schools they manage. Prior to SodexoMagic and Aramark, CPS Local 143 Engineers provided custodial oversight as part of their day-to-day duties and reported directly to principals at **no additional cost**. In disturbing contrast the IFM program now pays Aramark \$80 million annually for the same custodial oversight instead. SodexoMagic and Aramark custodians now work for those corporations instead of principals, and their combined profits divert an estimated \$50 million annually from classrooms.

International Operating Engineers President Bill Iacullo, who represents the Local 143 school engineers, blasted the board for not heeding the warnings of parents and taxpayers who will end up paying more for the same services they had prior to the lucrative contracts. “We have yet to get the full story from the Board and we have been asking for cost savings since the pilot began,” stated Iacullo. “They published numbers in the agenda two days before the vote with no real explanation, no transparency, and no cost savings.”

At a time when principals were threatened with 30 percent budget cuts, SodexoMagic Facilities Management Company funneled \$250,000 in campaign cash to Rahm Emanuel in exchange for a contract award of \$80 million to privatize CPS engineers and custodians in 33 schools. Aramark Corporation also received \$282 million in lucrative contracts for custodial management in the remaining schools of the Board’s pilot program.

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“SodexoMagic and Aramark have been removed from countless schools around the country for overbilling, unethical practices and poor performance, and they need to be removed from CPS,” stated Iacullo. “When scarce public funds are diverted to private profit with little fiscal accountability, when principals are denied oversight of custodians and engineers in favor of distant corporate managers, and when the safety and cleanliness of our schools deteriorate for lack of adequate staffing by skeleton crews – schools, children and learning suffer.”

President of the Chicago Principals and Administrators Association, Troy A. LaRaviere, explained that his principals want control over school engineers back like they had prior to the change in 2012. “A majority, nearly 90 percent of principals who responded to an annual survey, want supervision of the engineers in their buildings. Why pay outside vendors hundreds of millions of dollars to do what custodians and engineers were already doing for tens of millions of dollars less?”

According to a Sun Times story on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, LaRaviere complained those private employees in the IFM schools were not in the buildings and described the program as “absentee facilities management.”

Last year, the Chicago Teachers Union also conducted surveys on the pilot program with participants echoing the discontent of parents, principals and other staff in the buildings. “Privatization has led to filthy schools and deplorable conditions for our students. This needs to be stopped, not expanded,” stated CTU Vice-President Jesse Sharkey.

Iacullo concluded by asking members of the Board of Education to vote no on the IFM program and for the Governor and legislative leaders to weigh in before tomorrow’s vote by requiring a cost/impact study before public services are privatized. “If nothing else, Illinois and Chicago taxpayers have an absolute right to know how their money is about to be wasted. It’s simple transparency,” added Iacullo.

A website was created to provide facts, pictures, newspaper articles and an on-line petition to encourage parents, community groups and more to join the campaign. The website address is [www.saveourcpskids.org](http://www.saveourcpskids.org).

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