

Dear Gray School Parents and Students,

We've been hoping to write a note like this for a long time: today our leaders in Springfield passed legislation that provides additional funding for our schools next year, and builds a foundation for finalizing education funding reforms in the coming year.

This is an incredible moment for our district, and one that wouldn't have been possible without your hard work - in your schools, and in Springfield. The achievements our students made this year proved worth investing in, and the work you did to organize your school communities made sure that our elected leaders heard that message loud and clear.

Thank you.

Thank you for continuing the fight even as the task grew more difficult. And thank you for believing that this result was possible, even after years of proof to the contrary.

The bills voted on today make possible more than \$600 million in new revenue to CPS, enough to open school on time, better protect our classrooms in the year ahead, and to put our worst fears behind us.

As many of you have already noted, however, with a nearly \$1 billion deficit, this total does not mean we are in the clear. While we may no longer need budget cuts to the tune of 25%, we will need to continue to tighten our belts as we work towards a balanced budget for FY '18. Best practice spending policies will still be enforced, and some strategic cuts will still need to be made.

With this additional funding now official, you should expect to hear more about the timeline for receiving your individual school budgets next week. Additionally, more information about the upcoming Legal Conference and Principal Institute will be shared as we finalize budget details.

Finally, we want to make sure you knew that today we also made our FY '16 pension payment to the Chicago Teachers Pension Fund, for a total of \$676 million. While supporting teachers who've worked hard to earn their pension, we are pleased that today's actions in Springfield could mean this is the last payment we make as the only school district that receives virtually no help from the state.

We took a big step forward today. While it's clear our work around equal funding reforms will continue, we now have the financial stability to plan for the year ahead. We also hope you'll share this news with your school communities, and have included a sample letter here to help you do that.

We hope you have a relaxing and happy July 4th - and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Susan Gross, Principal

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