

Chicago Teachers Union Sellout

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

Region: [USA](#)

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It's in the air. Union bosses and city officials struck a deal. A previous article headlined Capitulation in Chicago? Final details aren't known, but bet on it. It's baked in the cake. By the time this article circulates, it may be official. It practically is now.

Unions in Chicago and across America ill represented rank-and-file members for decades. Corporate and government negotiators know it. Beating labor means staying hardline and waiting them out. They'll cave like they always do.

Months of discussions produced stalemate. On September 10, teachers walked out. Board of Education (BoE) and Chicago Public Schools (CPS) officials spurned them on core issues. Resolving them in five days reveals sellout.

Saving public education is key. It's a fundamental right. It's on the chopping block for elimination. Commodifying it as another business profit center is planned.

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel is hellbent on doing it. Doing so means placing bottom line priorities over teaching and learning.

Schools aren't businesses. Education isn't a product. It's a bedrock societal obligation. Keeping it out of profiteer hands is essential. Teachers are on their own to save it. It's also up to them to preserve their jobs with decent pay and benefits, as well as futures for Chicago kids.

Union bosses think sacrificing what's too important to lose doesn't matter as long as their welfare is secure. There's still a chance to beat them. Grassroots efforts alone can do it. Final contract terms aren't approved.

Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) president Karen Lewis wants House of Delegates approval fast. They're the CTU's governing body. Members elect them. They number over 700. Every city school is represented.

All union members have final say. Tallying their votes will take days. Once strike action ends and classes resume, it'll be too late to say no deal. Saying it now crucial. Later won't matter. Perhaps 24 hours means the difference between victory and defeat.

On September 15, the [Chicago Tribune](#) headlined "Tentative deal reached with striking Chicago teachers," saying:

Contract terms are agreed on. A tentative deal was struck. A City Hall source said school officials and union bosses reached a "framework with all points resolved."

Lewis revealed her duplicity. She's "very comfortable" with terms. "We think it's a framework that will get us to an agreement." She didn't explain what's in it, and most

important what's not.

"Creative thinking" was involved, she claimed. "They thought about some stuff, and we thought about some stuff."

Education isn't "stuff." It's teaching, learning, and preparing kids effectively to move on for more of the same through graduation.

CTU attorney Robert Block said union officials will recommend the deal to members. He expects House of Delegates approval Sunday.

He and Lewis didn't explain why terms are withheld. CTU vice president Jesse Sharkey spilled the beans, saying:

"If our membership looks at a detailed summary of an entire contract and rejects it, then we are still on strike."

In other words, they'll reveal sellout. A bad deal no one should approve will be scuttled. Union bosses want sugar-coating cover. They want defeat looking like victory. Hopefully rank and file members will act in time to stop them.

School board president David Vitale was upbeat. "The heavy lifting is over," he said. "The general framework is in place. My message (to parents) is they should be prepared to have their kids in school on Monday."

His comments and body language alone show Emanuel got what he wanted. It's at the expense of teachers, parents, and kids. He confirmed it saying the deal is "an honest and principled compromise that is about who we all work for: our students."

He doesn't give a damn about students, teachers, and all ordinary Chicagoans. He represents money and power interests. What benefits them harms others.

"It's a deal," headlined a [Tribune](#) editorial, saying:

Parents "no doubt cheered the news." Wait 'till they find out what they got and see their reaction. Wait 'till teachers and student learn they were sold out.

"Schools will open Monday," said the Tribune. "That's all most parents will care to know." Did Emanuel really get the "reform" he wanted, it asked? Will public education destruction continue unabated? Will marketplace rules replace it?

Can teachers be fired or laid off freely? Will seniority rights no longer matter? Will principals have dictat authority? Will teaching to the test still be policy? Will teacher evaluations depend on prioritizing it over learning and good education? It looks certain on all counts and more.

The Tribune seems almost sanguine about dozens of planned school closures, consolidations, and parents left scrambling over where to send their kids when nearby schools close.

A Chicago Sun Times [editorial](#) tried having it both ways. Headlined "Stand up to teachers, but don't demonize them," it said:

'Allow us today to come to the defense of the striking Chicago teachers in a way that will fully please almost nobody, certainly not the teachers.'

Teachers aren't greedy, it said. They're not striking for themselves alone. Sure they want better pay, good benefits, and job security. "Who doesn't? No apologies necessary."

They also want justifiable school improvements "so they can do their jobs right....These are not faked-up issues." They're real. Kids can't learn properly in classrooms too cold or hot to learn.

Up-to-date textbooks are essential. So are manageable class sizes. Striking teachers aren't "aliens dropped among us, selfish and dumb and duped by their union bosses. They're hardworking Chicagoans..." They take great pride in their work.

They want and deserve "schools they can believe in and be proud of, schools where they can do their job right. They want it for themselves and for their students."

Now the part they won't like. "They have to call of this strike." It's baked in the cake, of course. Unless grassroots displeasure balks its sellout terms, classes will resume Monday.

"They've already gained" enough, said the Sun Times. "There are serious doubts as to whether the city can even afford" concessions made.

What's lost matters most. No matter. The "city must hold the line..."

"As we said, this is an editorial sure to please almost no one....we believe this strike is wrong."

Sun Times editorial writers don't care about what's most important. Nor do Tribune bosses. Neither mentioned public education, its importance, and how Emanuel plans destroying a societal bedrock.

Remember those teachers "who made us what we are today," said the Sun Times. At the same time, it forgot what's most important and why it matters.

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago and can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net.

His new book is titled "How Wall Street Fleeces America: Privatized Banking, Government Collusion and Class War"

<http://www.claritypress.com/Lendman.html>

Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com and listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network Thursdays at 10AM US Central time and Saturdays and Sundays at noon. All programs are archived for easy listening.

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Articles by: [Stephen Lendman](#)

About the author:

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html> Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com. Listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network. It airs three times weekly: live on Sundays at 1PM Central time plus two prerecorded archived programs.

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