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CPS CEO Byrd-Bennett Releases Five-Year District Action Plan, “The Next Generation: Chicago’s Children”

Action Plan Establishes Comprehensive Accountability System Tied To Goal Of Providing Every Child in Every Neighborhood With A High-Quality Education

CHICAGO – Chicago Public Schools (CPS) CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett today unveiled “The Next Generation: Chicago’s Children,” a comprehensive, 5-year action plan designed to provide every CPS student in every neighborhood across the city with a rigorous, well-rounded instructional program that prepares them for success in college, career and life.

“Every child in every community deserves a high-quality education in a safe learning environment with rich and robust investments that will give them all the tools they need to be successful in school and throughout life,” said CEO Byrd-Bennett. “While the District has made steady progress over the last few years, this plan will put every child on a path toward a 21st high-quality education.”

“The Next Generation – Chicago’s Children” was developed based on feedback from parents, community members, principals, teachers and civic and faith leaders who expressed demand for better educational opportunities. The action plan builds on the Mayor’s educational priority of expanding high-quality options to neighborhoods across the Chicago.

“As a city, the most important thing we can do is make sure we offer a bright future for the next generation, and a critical component is ensuring that every child in this city has an education that matches their full potential,” said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. “This comprehensive action plan provides a strategic roadmap for achieving this goal, grounded in the idea that with teachers and principals, engaged parents and supportive communities working together, our children can succeed.”

The action plan will act as a roadmap for delivering positive outcomes tied to the District’s five strategic pillars:

Pillar 1: High standards, rigorous curriculum and powerful instruction

CPS is raising standards and improving curriculum through a combination of transitioning to Common Core State Standards, setting more rigorous expectations, and putting in place new academic requirements that will provide children with a well-rounded education. In addition, enhanced professional development for educators and greater opportunities for student learning such as extracurricular activities, afterschool programs, and internships will help challenge students to think critically, spark their creativity, and support their diverse needs.

Pillar 2: Systems of supports that meet all students' needs

CPS recognizes that every student is unique and high expectations must be coupled with an approach that systematically supports the individual needs of every student. Through the action plan, a greater emphasis will be placed on assisting all schools, especially struggling schools, in providing a safe learning environment, expanding social and emotional learning, using data to inform decision-making, and ensuring every student not only graduates high school but graduates ready with a postsecondary plan.

Pillar 3: Engaged and empowered families and communities

To improve the District's ability to provide comprehensive support to every child in every neighborhood, CPS must engage and empower families and communities as partners in its work while also raising the rigor and expectations of CPS staff and school leaders. By increasing outreach opportunities and offering more transparent information about the District's work, CPS will encourage active partnerships with parents and families as well as nonprofits and businesses, universities and community groups, faith-based leaders and government officials, and philanthropists and activists. With parents as active partners in our children's education, the support and guidance from our great teachers, and community involvement, there is no limit to what our children can achieve.

Pillar 4: Committed and effective teachers, leaders and staff

To fill vacancies within our system, CPS will seek to promote high-performers while recruiting national candidates. For the professionals already serving in our District, performance will be evaluated more thoughtfully through improved evaluations, professional development will be tailored more specifically to meet schools' and students' needs, and success will be recognized and rewarded.

Pillar 5: Sound fiscal, operational and accountability systems

Overall, the action plan will be guided by sound fiscal, operational and accountability systems. Every position, program and expenditure will be an investment that is deemed essential to fulfilling the action plan and making progress on the Mayor and CEO's vision of providing every child in every neighborhood with a high-quality education. A comprehensive accountability system will be put in place to measure performance and progress throughout the District, including in all public schools – neighborhood, charter and contract – and at CPS Central Office. To support the plan's overall goals, CPS will issue an annual District scorecard that incorporates multiple performance metrics, including evaluations of school climate; feedback from parents, school staff, and students; retention rates of high-performing employees; student attendance; academic growth; graduation rates and college enrollment.

From unprecedented investments in early childhood education to Full Day Kindergarten, a Full School Day, a single school year calendar, and ensuring there are quality principals and teachers in every school, Chicago is building a strong foundation that provides every student with the tools and resources needed to

succeed.

“High school graduation is no longer the goal, it is only the starting point,” added CEO Byrd-Bennett. “I faced many of the same challenges that our young people face today, but I know that they can triumph if the adults in their life make it their mission to ensure they achieve their dreams.”

The Chicago Public Schools serves approximately 403,000 students in 681 schools. It is the nation’s third-largest school system.

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