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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 25, 2013

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**MAYOR EMANUEL AND CPS CEO BYRD-BENNETT ANNOUNCE FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN
FOR ALL CPS STUDENTS**

*Investment Ensures All 30,700 CPS Kindergarten Students Have Full, High-Quality
Start To Their Education*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Chicago Public Schools (CPS) CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett today announced that for the first time, every CPS school will offer full-day kindergarten starting next school year. Mayor Emanuel and CPS have increased access to full-day kindergarten by 50 percent since 2011 and CEO Byrd-Bennett is now ensuring that all incoming students have access to full-day kindergarten by making it a budget priority. This \$15 million investment builds upon CEO Byrd-Bennett and Mayor Emanuel's commitment to support high-quality early childhood education as a vital and integral part of providing every student with the education they deserve to excel.

"Every single child deserves to have a high quality education that will prepare them to succeed in life. That can't happen if they are behind their peers across the nation when they enter first grade," said Mayor Emanuel. "Guaranteeing full-day kindergarten for the first time gives every student a full education from the very start. From early learning on up through college, we are making smart, critical investments that support our students' bright futures."

Children who attend a quality, full-day kindergarten demonstrate notable academic advantages in later years over students who did not, including more independent learning, classroom involvement and productivity. However, Illinois school districts are not required to fund full-day kindergarten.

"I applaud Mayor Emanuel and CPS CEO Byrd-Bennett for offering full-day kindergarten at every CPS school for the first time in Chicago's history," said U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. "Like most other states, Illinois does not mandate kindergarten, and making early learning a priority in tight fiscal times demonstrates Mayor Emanuel's forward-thinking leadership. This strategic investment in the education of young Chicagoans will not only improve their preparation for school and their life chances - it will also immeasurably strengthen and enrich this great city."

Over the past two years CPS has steadily expanded access to full-day kindergarten, adding 6,000 additional seats in last school year alone, bringing the total number of students with access to full-day kindergarten up to 26,500. But with this change, CPS will move from guaranteeing only a half-day kindergarten in elementary schools to guaranteeing a full-day for the approximately 30,700 children entering CPS each year.

“As a mother, grandmother and former teacher, I know investing in our children at an early age is critical,” said CPS CEO Byrd-Bennett. “I made universal full-day kindergarten a priority for our schools because frankly our children cannot afford to wait. We must invest our resources in smart ways that provide every student in every school with a full education from the very first moment they walk through our doors.”

Central office cuts will allow CPS to expand full day kindergarten across the city. Specifically, the central office will reduce overtime, make more efficient use of outside contracts for facilities management, and implement utility efficiencies related to the renegotiation of energy rates, resulting in a realization of more than \$15 million in savings in fiscal year 2014.

This announcement is part of strategic efforts led by Mayor Emanuel and CEO Byrd-Bennett to ensure that Chicago’s schools are providing every child with a high-quality education. From unprecedented investments in early childhood education and guaranteeing a full school day and year for all students, to expanding access to quality options like STEM, IB and selective enrollment schools, Mayor Emanuel and CEO Byrd-Bennett continue to make the investments and choices that work to help every child succeed.

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