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MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES COMPLETION OF BELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ADDITION

Project Provides New Science, Music and Art Rooms

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today joined parents and staff at Bell Elementary School to announce the completion of the Bell annex that will provide more classroom space to enhance curriculum and provide greater opportunities at the school in the city's North Center community.

"This new addition exemplifies how our school modernization strategy invests in providing technology and resources to our students to prepare them to be 100 percent college ready and 100 percent college bound," Mayor Emanuel said. "With the resources now available at Bell, our students will be shaping the future."

The expansion includes new amenities for its students, including a new science lab, music room and art room. A new multipurpose room and cooking kitchen are also included in the addition. The project also included selected renovations of the existing building in order to upgrade life safety provisions in the auditorium, finishes in the gymnasium, relocation and renovation of the library and the creation of a new nurse's suite.

"Today we celebrate the opening of new doors, new opportunities and renewed investments in the learning environment of Chicago's school children," said Illinois Senate President John Cullerton. "We should provide the best if we want our students and teachers to be inspired to be their best. Improved learning centers are a part of that equation. That's why I believe this opening is one of the best examples of investing in the future."

Additionally, the annex includes environmentally sustainable features, including water use reduction measures, durable materials, and improved natural light and views.

"The Bell addition is an exciting result of a partnership between my office, the Mayor's office, Gov. Quinn, Senate President Cullerton, Chicago Public Schools, the Public Building Commission, and the entire Bell School community," said Alderman Ameya Pawar (47th). Countless hours of advocacy and planning went into making this addition possible – it was an all-hands on deck effort. The Bell School is a special place for students, families and the community at large. I'm honored to stand with my neighbors and cut the ribbon."

The Public Building Commission of Chicago, on behalf of Chicago Public Schools, managed the design, procurement and construction of the \$10 million, 19,000-square-foot project, which was

paid for entirely with state funds. Due to exemplary cost and schedule controls, the project was completed on time and under budget. The PBC will continue with renovation work at the existing school now that the addition is complete and that work, along with exterior site improvements, will be completed in June 2014.

The Alexander Graham Bell School was built in 1917 for the specific purpose of educating deaf and hearing children together and the school has maintained a commitment to this dual-program approach. Over the years, there have been significant changes in the educational methods for teaching hearing impaired students, which now include total communication, an approach using speech and sign language. The renovations and work in the addition reflect the needs of the program at Bell and include acoustically appropriate materials that complement and enhance the learning environment.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and CPS CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett are committed to ensuring that students graduate from the City's high schools, 100 percent college ready and 100 percent college bound. Modernizing our schools and giving parents strong choices for their children's education is essential to ensuring that we are able to reach that goal. Currently, there is a \$3.5 billion deficit in capital improvements to our schools for repair and maintenance alone. Since 2012, CPS has worked to leverage and commit approximately one billion capital dollars to improve access to technology, critical learning resources, and amenities at schools across the District to give children the resources and learning environment they need to excel and thrive in the classroom.

Photo Caption: Mayor Emanuel visits with students at Bell Elementary School

Photo Credit: Brooke E. Collins // City of Chicago

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