



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
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**MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES CONSTRUCTION BEGINNING AT CVCA, WHICH WILL TRANSFORM SCHOOL FOR 21ST CENTURY LEARNING AND CAREER TRAINING WHILE CREATING JOBS FOR THE COMMUNITY**

*Since 2012, the Mayor has Leveraged over One Billion in Capital Funds to Invest in Local Schools Across the City*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced that construction has begun on the renovation of Chicago Vocational Career Academy (CVCA), which is creating new career-focused classrooms to prepare students for jobs in a variety of high growth industries, such as horticulture, carpentry, culinary services and healthcare.

“The investments at CVCA will give students access to state-of-the-art facilities and a high quality education that will help them develop a solid academic foundation and valuable skills to compete for a career,” Mayor Emanuel said. “Whether it is a STEM, IB, military, magnet or neighborhood school, we are making the necessary investments today to provide a true 21st century education that will give our kids better opportunities tomorrow.”

The project is being funded by state capital dollars, which State Senator Donne Trotter (D-17th District) was instrumental in securing, and is being delivered in 2 phases. The first phase includes renovating Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) and Career to Education labs and workshops, set to be complete before the Fall 2014 semester begins. The second phase will include major building infrastructure repair and replacement to be complete in 2015.

“As a graduate of CVCA’s carpentry program, I know first-hand how important this school is to helping our students achieve their goals and dreams and to finding a job,” said Alderman Michelle Harris. “This project embodies the school motto at CVCA: ‘It’s a New Day at CVCA’ and will bring substantial improvements to ensure that CVCA can offer the best facilities possible so students are learning in an environment that will give them the skills and knowledge they need to move into careers upon graduation.”

Beyond the renovation of classrooms and the addition of technical education space for specialized classes and training, exterior and system upgrades will be made, including mechanical, electrical and plumbing improvements, building repairs to the 87th Street Wing and demolition of the Anthony Avenue wing. Renovations will also include building façade stone and masonry repairs, roof replacement, storm water management, and public right of way improvements such as landscaping, ornamental fencing, lighting and ADA curb ramps.

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“Along with the other members of the Black Legislative Caucus, I am proud that we were able to secure state funds for this project and know that every penny of this investment will pay off as we help today’s students become tomorrow’s successful citizens,” said State Senator Donne Trotter. “Our community will also benefit from construction jobs during the project and I am grateful to our community partners and the PBC for their efforts at reaching out to our residents.”

This project will create 250 jobs. The Public Building Commission (PBC) is overseeing the renovation project and has worked closely on outreach about these jobs to the following community organizations: African American Contractors Association, Black Contractors United, Black United Fund of Illinois, Chatham Business Association, Cosmopolitan Chamber of Commerce, Southeast Chicago Chamber of Commerce and the South Shore Chamber of Commerce. The PBC, in partnership with these organizations, held two community hiring events on February 27 and March 6 at the school. As part of its ongoing community hiring commitment, the PBC is raising its contract requirements for minority and women-owned business participation on this project from the standard 28% to 35% for the minimum minority participation required, with a goal of an even higher level of participation for this project.

Last year, Mayor Emanuel announced that CVCA was selected as one of five high schools to participate in a new partnership with five technology companies to create new Early College STEM and Careers to Education (CTE) programs. At CVCA, Motorola is the STEM partner, and Navistar and Allied Health will be involved with the fleet vehicle maintenance and health care career training. Since last year, CVCA has seen an 11.4% jump in the proportion of students who are on track to graduate by the end of freshmen year and this investment will help to further cement its progress.

The investments at CVCA are part of the Mayor and CPS’ larger strategy to invest in improving local schools. 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 support they need to excel and thrive in the classroom.

To modernize schools across the city, CPS and the District are:

- Improving CPS facilities in order to provide safe, healthy and supportive learning environments such as sufficient space for the number of students in the building and access to advanced technology, playlots, modern computer and media labs, libraries, and ADA accessibility; Upgrading facilities districtwide so that classrooms are equipped to deliver core instructional programs and to support, as needed, specialized programs through dedicated spaces, specialized laboratories, unique equipment, and enhanced technology infrastructure;
- Directing resources toward upgrading the quality of education students receive by expanding access to high-quality programs such as International Baccalaureate (IB) Programmes, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) programs, Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs and Service Leadership (military) schools. The Chicago area has near 10% unemployment, but more than 100,000 unfilled jobs and roughly 77% of all jobs today require some kind of technical skill set. Access to a STEM education is one way to address the skills gap that undermines our economic competitiveness and threatens our future prosperity; and

- Addressing the gap between students who qualify for selective enrollment schools and the amount of seats available. Last year, 18,000 students applied for 3,000 freshman selective enrollment seats across the City. There are approximately 2,500 students who qualify for selective enrollment high schools, but CPS does not have enough capacity in selective enrollment high schools to accommodate these students. This year, the Mayor announced increased capacity at Payton and Jones College Prep to give students more access to these competitive seats.

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Photo Caption: Mayor Emanuel visits with students at CVCA

Photo Credit: Brooke Collins // City of Chicago