



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 21, 2013

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**MAYOR RAHM EMANUEL, POLICE SUPERINTENDENT GARRY MCCARTHY, AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CEO BARBARA BYRD-BENNETT VISIT SAFE PASSAGE WORKERS**

CPS Expands Safe Passage Program with 600 New Safe Passage Workers

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy, and Chicago Public Schools CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett visited a training session for safe passage workers who are ready to get to work on the first day of school, August 26. Last year, there were more than 600 Safe Passage workers serving schools enrolled in this program, and this year CPS has nearly doubled the program as part of its expansion to all welcoming schools.

"The whole city is with you, shoulder to shoulder, doing our part to make sure every child in every neighborhood is safe on the way to and from school and has academic success once they get there," Mayor Emanuel said to the safe passage workers. "Safe Passage is about more than just building a route to school; it is about building a route to college, career and beyond, so that once our kids get to school, they get the world-class education they deserve."

This school year, CPS added 52 safe passage routes, expanding the program to serve a total of 91 schools. Over the last two years, crime on safe passage routes was down 20% and incidents among students were down 27% the schools. CPS will continue to work closely with the community and the Chicago Police Department for all schools to ensure that all children can focus on their studies and not their safety.

"The safety of our children has always been, and will always be everyone's top priority, for Mayor Emanuel, CPS, CPD, principals, Safe Passage workers, block clubs, residents and parents," said Superintendent McCarthy. "In addition to the hundreds of the community-based Safe Passage workers who will staff these routes, our CAPS officers have been working to ensure a positive adult presence near the routes by knocking on the doors or residents on more than 625 blocks to engage the community in the program."

All safe passage workers have undergone a comprehensive training program that taught them how to effectively staff their post and safely support out children, how to build relationships, anticipate issues

before they occur, and proper protocols for de-escalating situations. Training will be on-going throughout the year.

"Ensuring that every child has access to a safe and nurturing learning environment is one of our top priorities, which is why we are expanding our successful Safe Passage program to every Welcoming School," said CPS CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett. "But a Safe Passage route is more than just a sign that reads "Safe Passage" - it's a comprehensive strategy that includes tens of thousands of city resources to ensure routes are physically safe while investing in an additional 600 community-based workers who work in hand in hand with the Chicago Police Department and school leadership Monday through Friday as children make their way to and from school."

The safe passage program is part of a larger strategy to keep children safe on their daily commute to school. The Mayor called on every City department and agency to work in tandem with CPD and CPS to assist with Safe Passage and ensure a smooth and safe transition for students. Responding to the Mayor's directive, the City has delivered over 33,000 city services along safe passage routes in the past four months ranging from boarding and demolishing buildings, addressing complaints about businesses, trimming trees, installing Safe Passage signs, cutting weeds that are overgrown, expanding our crosswalk painting program, removing graffiti, and repairing sidewalks and street lights. CPD also worked all summer with CAPS on community outreach to educate and engage residents about safe passage.

CPS has held multiple meetings with parents and school administrators to discuss Safe Passage and answer questions about the routes. Additionally, as part of a comprehensive back-to-school packet, parents received a copy of their school-specific Safe Passage route. CPS also called, texted and emailed all families enrolled at schools with safe passage. The safe passage routes are also available at cps.edu/safepassage.

#