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**MAYOR EMANUEL INTRODUCES GROUNDBREAKING INITIATIVE TO ENCOURAGE
POSTSECONDARY PLANNING
AND SUCCESS BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL**

Class of 2020 Will Demonstrate Thoughtful Postsecondary Plans to Receive Diplomas

Mayor Rahm Emanuel joined Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Chief Education Officer Janice Jackson today to announce a new graduation initiative designed to guide postsecondary success for students of all levels by requiring that they develop plans for life after graduation. Starting with current freshmen - the Class of 2020 - students must have a postsecondary plan in hand in order to graduate. Pending approval by the Board of Education, CPS will become the first large urban district in the country to require students to develop a postsecondary plan in order to receive a diploma.

"High school graduation is a milestone, not a destination," said Mayor Emanuel. "The City of Chicago is proud that CPS students are making record academic gains from reading and math achievement to high school graduation and college enrollment. Ensuring every student has a plan for success after high school is the right thing to do for our students' futures, and the right thing to do for Chicago's future."

CPS's plan to ensure every student has considered the options for what comes after high school graduation—called "Learn. Plan. Succeed." will build upon Mayor Emanuel's major investment in postsecondary preparation—including his goal announced last year to ensure that 50 percent of CPS students graduate with at least one college or career credential. The more credits students can earn in high school, the more steps ahead they will be in postsecondary life.

"Learn. Plan. Succeed. is the next step in our overarching mission of preparing students for a rewarding and impactful life," said Chief Education Officer Jackson. "We all need to change how we think about what it means to be a high school graduate - a diploma alone isn't enough anymore. At CPS, we've long believed that high school is only a stepping stone, and now we're ensuring that every one of our students has given real consideration to what's next - and taken action to succeed."

"Learn. Plan. Succeed." is an evidence-based approach designed to steer all students on a path to success in the next steps of their education--whether it's a four-year university, City Colleges,

trades/apprenticeships, military, and internships. Under the proposed initiative, CPS will give credit to several recognized postsecondary paths to ensure a level playing field for all students. While CPS' goal is to make sure every student can graduate with the skills and resources to pursue higher education, CPS also believes that there is more than one path to a successful future.

"This groundbreaking proposal will help empower CPS students to clearly define what they want out of life and reach their goals as they prepare to graduate," said CPS CEO Forrest Claypool. "As a national leader in postsecondary readiness, we will continue to launch initiatives that give our students the skills and confidence they need to succeed when they leave our schools."

Under the proposed policy, the following concrete steps would meet the District's ambitious proposed graduation requirement:

- College acceptance letter
- Military acceptance/enlistment letter
- Acceptance at a job program (e.g. coding bootcamp)
- Acceptance into a trades pre-apprenticeship/apprenticeship
- Acceptance into a "gap-year" program
- Current job/job offer letter

According to a UChicago Consortium [report](#), *From High School to the Future: Potholes on the Road to College*, many students face complex barriers during the transition between student and graduate. This same report acknowledges that educators, particularly in urban institutions, are now being called upon to play new and important roles in the lives of their students due to the increased rigor and demands of planning for college and career today.

While CPS has implemented several initiatives since the publication of this report, the District will continue building, growing and fostering a culture and structure that views high school as a launch pad rather than a last stop destination.

Since 2011, CPS student achievement outcomes have dramatically improved, and Mayor Emanuel and CPS continue to invest in new resources and establish new goals for our students. By setting high expectations for our schools and students, expanding access to 21st Century education models and resources, including STEM and IB programs, and developing innovative Career and Technical Education programs, CPS and the City of Chicago are working to improve educational outcomes and provide every one of our students with a high-quality education that prepares them to explore a variety of paths to a successful future.

In 2013, CPS began training staff to obtain the Chicago College Advising Credential (CCAC), which will best equip staff to support concrete post-secondary plans, with a goal ensuring every high school has a certified counselor or coach. To date, roughly 40 percent of school counselors have obtained this certification and as part of this initiative, CPS will ensure all counselors have the training. Working with the Mayor, CPS is raising the approximately \$1 million in funding from the philanthropic and business communities to accelerate this training.

The Board of Education will consider Learn. Plan. Succeed. at an upcoming meeting.

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