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**MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES EXPANSION OF SCHOOL-BASED VISION PROGRAM TO  
GIVE 30,000 CPS STUDENTS FREE VISION EXAMS AND GLASSES**

*Program Is a Direct Result of The Mayor's Budget Commitment*

Today Mayor Emanuel was joined by Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) Commissioner Dr. Bechara Choucair to announce the expansion of a school-based vision program in CPS starting next week thanks to a \$1 million investment made directly from the FY 2013 City Budget. With this program, 30,000 CPS students who failed vision screenings this year will have access to free vision exams and eyeglasses, if needed.

"A budget is a reflection of our city's values and there is no better investment than one in the children of Chicago. Through this investment, we are more than tripling the number of CPS students who receive free eye exams, and providing glasses to those who need them," said Mayor Emanuel. "Working in partnership with parents, we can ensure that our students have the tools they need to excel, including the quality vision care that gives them the ability to see the blackboard and also more clearly see the bright future that is ahead of them."

Last year, 200,000 CPS students were provided vision screenings; 30,000 of these failed that screening and were recommended to receive a comprehensive vision exam. Due to either a lack of access, information or resources, most of these 30,000 students did not receive the necessary vision exam or fitting for glasses.

Through the 2013 City budget, the City is investing \$1 million to close this gap of 30,000 students and establish a CDPH Vision Program to complement CPS' existing vision program. Among all school-age children, seventeen to twenty-five percent have vision problems that are significant enough to impair their academic performance.

“Academic performance can improve when a student’s basic vision needs are addressed, and we are deeply committed to working with parents to ensure the health and wellness of our children,” said Dr. Bechara Choucair, CDPH Commissioner. “With this collaboration, we will continue working to make Chicago the healthiest city in the country.”

"Innovative services like this are another example of how we can make sure our students have the resources they need for success," said Dr. Stephanie Whyte, Chief Health Officer for Chicago Public Schools. "Better vision can lead to better educational outcomes, so we're happy to offer this program to our students."

Through this collaboration between CDPH and CPS, which launches May 15, 2013, 9 additional doctors will begin providing school-based services and glasses fittings for students. School-based eye exams will continue through the end of the school year and then resume when school starts again in August.

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