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**MAYOR RAHM EMANUEL AND CPS CEO BYRD-BENNETT ANNOUNCE INCREASED
ATTENDANCE ACROSS EVERY GRADE LAST YEAR**

Both Elementary and High School Attendance Improved in First Year of New CPS Attendance Plan

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Chicago Public Schools (CPS) CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett today announced that attendance rates from kindergarten through 12th grade rose to 93.2 percent in School Year 2013– 2014 (SY 13-14), an increase of 0.7 percent. As part of this increase, 181,306 students improved their attendance rates over the previous year.

“Chicago Public School students continue to set new standards of excellence as they come to school each day ready to learn,” said Mayor Emanuel. “As we prepare for another successful school year, we must ensure our students are prepared for bright futures. Our teachers, parents, and principals are committed to achieve 100 percent attendance for every child in every neighborhood.”

CPS piloted a comprehensive attendance plan in 2014, designed to increase student attendance and strategically address barriers that result in chronic absence and chronic truancy. Keeping students engaged and connected to their school communities is critical in preparing them for success in college, career and life, because when students are not in school, they miss critical instruction time, impacting academic performance and ability to graduate on time.

“Strong attendance is the foundation for success, and we continue to work with parents and school communities to remove barriers to attendance,” CPS CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett said. “Students must be in the classroom to be able to graduate 100 percent college-ready and 100 percent college-bound.”

As part of the pilot, 183 schools were selected based upon need to benefit from \$3 million in targeted funds to improve attendance. Targeted schools demonstrated positive shifts, with attendance rates increasing twice as much as the schools that did not receive these investments, and both chronic absenteeism and chronic truancy declining twice as much.

CPS also made revisions last year to its Student Code of Conduct (SCC), replacing punitive consequences with restorative discipline practices that keep students in the classroom while also teaching positive behavior. These revisions include simplified policy language and reserving out-of-school suspensions for only the most serious offenses. Earlier revisions to the SCC in 2012 led to an unprecedented 36 percent drop in out of school suspensions.

In recent years, there has been a steady decrease in chronic absence at the high school level, though in SY12-13 there was an uptick in the elementary grades. In SY13-14, chronic absenteeism declined substantially district-wide and at every grade level. In SY13-14, chronic truancy rates also decreased overall and at every grade level, building on steady decreases over time at the high school level and reversing recent increases in chronic truancy at the elementary grades.

From preschool through high school, absenteeism has serious implications for academic outcomes. According to the Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research, students who are chronically absent have lower test scores, a lower likelihood of being on-track in high school, lower likelihood of graduating, and lower course grades; all of which can hinder chances of graduation.

As part of the comprehensive Attendance and Truancy plan, CPS will work with partners across the city and state to implement universal systems of support, such as early warning indicator data systems, data sharing agreements across districts and community partners to support locating and re-engaging chronically absent students, and citywide marketing efforts to raise awareness about the importance of attendance.

The District will continue to invest in targeted interventions that address the unique needs of each school community and deliver tailored supports that keep students in the classroom, including additional mentors, outreach workers, afterschool programs and training on building a positive school climate.

The District has also engaged in statewide and citywide interagency collaboration through participation in the State's Truancy in Chicago Public Schools Task Force and will incorporate member input into the final CPS Attendance and Truancy plan later this year.

The CPS Attendance and Truancy Department oversees the implementation of the district wide attendance and truancy strategy, through collaboration, partnership and communication with Network Offices. This work also directly supports staff, students, families, and community partners in efforts to increase attendance and student learning, creating a culture of attendance in every school, setting expectations as early as Pre-K.

CPS calculates attendance rates based on total school days enrolled compared to total school days attended. In 2014, CPS students attended 61,527,525 days out of 66,040,955 total membership days, a rate of 93.2 percent. In 2013, 62,290,024.5 days out of 67,357,082 total membership, a rate of 92.5 percent. This is the standard used by school districts across the country to calculate average student attendance rate.

The 2013-14 CPS attendance data is available [here](#).

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