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CHICAGO UNVEILS NEW *HEALTHY CPS ACTION PLAN*

Plan Contains 60 Detailed Strategies to Improve Health and Wellness of Students; City Increasing Physical Activity Space for 150,000 Students; Doubling Number of School Gardens; Standardizing Physical Education Curriculum

Mayor Emanuel, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett and Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) Commissioner Dr. Bechara Choucair today unveiled the *Healthy CPS Action Plan*, which contains 60 detailed, district-wide and concrete strategies to improve the health and wellness of Chicago's students. This plan builds on the school district's existing *Healthy CPS* agenda, which outlines specific goals for student health and brings CPS in line with Mayor Emanuel's city-wide agenda to help all Chicagoans get and stay healthy.

This announcement comes on the same day that First Lady Michelle Obama is recognizing Chicago's commitment to children's health with an event in her home town, celebrating the third anniversary of her successful *Let's Move!* initiative, which is dedicated to solving the childhood obesity epidemic within a generation.

"Good health is essential for good learning, and Chicago is leading the nation with comprehensive strategies to improve the health and wellness of all residents," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "Our goal is to ensure every student has the knowledge, tools and access necessary for good health. For the first time in decades, students are guaranteed recess with our full school day, and the *Healthy CPS Action Plan* builds on this and additional efforts to ensure students have healthy options and learn healthy habits that will help them succeed for years to come."

Healthy CPS is a comprehensive plan building off *Healthy Chicago*, the city's multi-faceted public health agenda dedicated to making Chicago the healthiest city in the nation. It follows other initiatives by Mayor Emanuel and CPS including the full school day, providing not only more time in the classroom, but also guaranteeing recess in all elementary schools. The *Healthy CPS Action Plan* outlines specific strategies to help meet the goals of the overall *Healthy CPS* agenda, and includes:

- CPS will work with the Chicago park district to provide increased space for physical activity to 150,000 students.
- CPS will double the number of school-based gardens, increasing student access to fresh foods and providing new opportunities for hands-on science education.
- CPS will develop and implement a standardized curriculum for physical education across all grade levels.
- CPS will expand access to free oral health exams, dental cleanings and sealants for all high school students, building off a successful program already in place for elementary school students.
- CPS will ensure all students receive a free vision screening and that students who fail their screenings have access to a local optometrist and free eyeglasses.

"Ensuring that our students receive nutrition education and have opportunities for physical activity can influence a lifetime of healthy choices," said Chicago Public Schools CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett. "But just as important is the impact that good health and nutrition have on academic achievement. Children who exercise and have nutritious diets are better able to concentrate and perform well in the classroom. The Healthy CPS initiative represents our commitment to creating and maintaining such an environment for all our students."

"Healthy CPS provides real, innovative, system-wide strategies that will make a difference," said Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Bechara Choucair, M.D. "From providing access to vision and oral care for every student to improving physical activity opportunities, we are working to help our students get and stay healthy."

In addition to releasing the Healthy CPS Action Plan, the CDPH and CPS also released a new *Report on Overweight and Obesity in CPS Students*, providing the most comprehensive look at how the national obesity epidemic affects Chicago's children. The findings show that while the overall proportion of students who are overweight or obese remains high, incoming CPS kindergarteners are on average at a healthier weight than the previous generation of kindergarteners. These numbers are promising and in line with national trends in large cities such as New York City and Los Angeles.

"While our findings are promising, we know there is still more work to do," Dr. Choucair continued. "We will continue move the ball forward and work to improve the health of our students, using specific strategies outlined in the *Healthy CPS Action Plan* and working with dedicated partners like the *Let's Move!* campaign. Together, we will make a difference in the lives of our children."

In November 2012, Chicago was one of only two large cities recognized by the National League of Cities for its accomplishments in reducing childhood obesity and its outstanding efforts to complete health and wellness goals for *Let's Move!* Cities, Towns and Counties, a major component of the First Lady's *Let's Move!* initiative.

From establishing one of the most ambitious public health agendas in the nation, to launching the largest municipal employee wellness plan in the country, to working to eliminate food deserts, to defining stringent nutrition standards for vending machines in city buildings and schools, and bringing recess back into schools for the first time in decades, Mayor Emanuel and the city of Chicago are committed to making make critical health initiatives a reality.

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