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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 22, 2014

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MAYOR EMANUEL BREAKS GROUND AT WILDWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ANNEX TO ALLEVIATE OVERCROWDING

Annexes at Wildwood and Oriole Park Elementary Schools Help Ease Overcrowding and Expand Classroom Space

Mayor Rahm Emanuel broke ground today on Chicago Public School's (CPS) Wildwood World Magnet School Annex project in the Forest Glen community on Chicago's Northwest Side. The addition will bring a 34,000 square foot, three-story building to the school, including 12 classrooms, a computer lab, art room, library, administrative suite and lunchroom. The annex and other renovations are expected to be completed in late summer 2015, in time for the 2015-2016 school year.

"We have a responsibility to our students to provide them with the resources of a 21st century education," said Mayor Emanuel. "After many years of our schools and communities finding creative solutions to overcrowding, we are now able to make the investment necessary to expand the facilities. Alleviating overcrowding is an essential part of our overall strategy to ensure our students will live up to their full potential."

The annex will address overcrowding at Wildwood, which is currently operating at nearly 185% capacity. While 431 students enrolled this school year, Wildwood's current building is designed for 240 students. The existing Wildwood school will also receive renovations to transform an existing classroom into a music classroom, a classroom and office into a single classroom and another classroom into a music storage area to complement the school's existing music room.

"Our students should not have to choose between a library or a lunchroom," said CPS CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett. "The Wildwood Elementary School annex will create the additional space necessary for students and teachers to concentrate on their studies. This will further our goal to ensure all of our students will graduate 100 percent college ready and 100 percent college bound."

Mayor Emanuel also announced construction will begin on another annex to help alleviate overcrowding at Oriole Park Elementary School, which will create 15 classrooms, a lunchroom, library, computer lab, science lab, and an administrative suite. Oriole Park, located in the Norwood Park community, will also receive renovations to transform an existing administrative suite into a classroom and the existing lunchroom into an art room. The annex and renovations on this project are also expected to be completed in late summer 2015, in time for the 2015-2016 school year.

"This new state of the art annex will represent a vision for the future," said Alderman Mary O'Connor (41st Ward). "The investment in Wildwood School, home of one of the city's most successful International Baccalaureate Programs, will continue to provide an excellent opportunity to earn a first rate education for generations to come."

As it does on all of its projects, the Public Building Commission (PBC), which is building the Wildwood and Oriole Park annexes on behalf of CPS, is committed to a high level of economic sustainability. Contract provisions on these projects require that at least 50 percent of the labor force be City of Chicago residents and that residents of the community area also be hired to work on the project. The PBC is also committed to contract provisions that require minority and women-owned business participation.

Under the leadership of Mayor Emanuel and CEO Byrd-Bennett, the District has made critical investments to expand high-quality school options for students across the city. Mayor Emanuel and CPS recently launched a modernization project at Dunne Technology Academy, located on the Far South Side, to incorporate a new Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) focus. These efforts include building new science and engineering labs to support the school's transition to the STEM school model and other facility upgrades.

"I'm happy to have worked with the community and city to bring this much needed annex to Wildwood School," said Illinois State Representative John D'Amico (15th District). "We couldn't have done this without the hard work and dedication of Mayor Emanuel, Alderman O'Connor, and Principal Cunat, as well as all of our parents and teachers."

In the past two years, Mayor Emanuel and CPS have addressed overcrowding at 33 local schools, including Addams, Bell, Columbia Explorers, Dever, Dirksen, Durkin Park, Edison Park, Gallistel, Hale, Lincoln, Little Village, Lock, Onahan, Pasteur, Peck, South Loop, Smyser, and Stevenson. Mayor Emanuel and CPS will address overcrowding at Canty, Edwards, and Jamieson through the CPS FY15 Capital budget as they continue to work together to identify funding for additional projects.

The Mayor and CPS remain firmly committed to working with individual communities to find innovative ways to relieve overcrowding at other local schools.

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